

DRAMATICS

An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

Vol. XX, No. 6

MARCH, 1949

35c Per Copy



Members of the Day Family for a production of *Life with Father* given at the Helena, Montana, High School (Thespian Troupe 745), with Doris E. Marshall as director. (Seated on the floor) Kenneth Granby as Harlan; (seated) Dorothy Ross as Mother, Edward Naughten as Father; (standing left to right) Douglas Bottomly as Whitney, Jack Harlen as Clarence, and Thomas Noel as John.

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COME OVER TO OUR HOUSE

By MARRIJANE and JOSEPH HAYES

8 MALES
10 FEMALES
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MODERN
COSTUMES



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The story revolves around the Eldridge household—pretty, widowed Mrs. Eldridge, the mother; lively, ambitious Marion, sixteen; and attractive Lindy, a Senior. It also revolves, most importantly, around son Jay—a serious lad with a great talent for serious, classical music who learns, when he meets the right girl (or is she the wrong girl?), that he also has a flair for swing, boogie-woogie and musical platter. This lands him in the school vaudeville—and a carload of trouble. The trouble reaches out and, as the play dances a merry leap-frog of exuberant, youthful fun, it involves his grandmother, his mother's two (no, three) romances, a Hollywood scout and the Russian conductor of the symphony orchestra. The conductor offers a scholarship—which Jay has been working toward—and the scout offers a Hollywood audition. Dilemma. Of course everyone offers a way out. But Jay, with the help of a stageful of comic absurdities, reaches his own conclusions. The three Eldridge kids, all bent on running their poor mother's life, learn the childishness of their selfishness and Mrs. Eldridge learns the importance of love.

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original advertising jingles. Even little sister Toots succumbs and enters a kindergarten clay modeling contest. However, to Debbie, sixteen and social, the big contest is with her irresponsible family, and she is backed up by domineering Aunt Isabel. Many complications finally reveal in a most heartwarming fashion that the BIG contest is the contest of life and the prize is happiness.

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Burton Rascoe, New York World-Telegram, said:
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Ward Morehouse, New York Sun, said:
 "The idea of SING OUT, SWEET LAND is a good one, that of depicting the pageantry of America in song and story, and when the folk music is being rendered, such as FOGGY, FOGGY DEW and BLUE TAIL FLY and ROCK CANDY MOUNTAIN the production is echanting."

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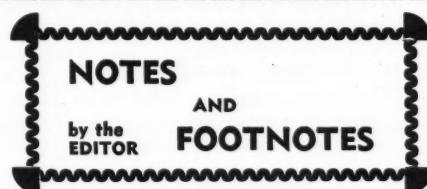
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Mention Dramatics



Reports reaching your editor from various parts of the country indicate that a broader program in dramatics is being offered during the spring semester by an increasing number of high schools.

Is your high school making plans to send a delegation to the Third National Dramatic Arts Conference (see page 3) at Indiana University next June? Here is a unique opportunity to help build greater prestige for your dramatics program. Many leaders and civic organizations in your community will gladly assist you in raising funds for this purpose. Why not bring this matter to their attention through your school and local papers.

A summary of the convention of the American Educational Theatre Association held in Washington, D. C., is available free of charge from The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request.

Due to lack of space, we shall not publish in DRAMATICS this season a directory of leading drama festivals and contests being sponsored this spring. However, we urge all high school dramatics groups to enter events of this kind as one of the best ways to stimulate interest in better standards of play production. The National Thespian

Society will award certificates of excellence to all high schools receiving ratings of first, second, or third places, or superior classification in the finals of state-wide festivals and contests.

A dramatics director located in the state of Washington writes that a dramatics club can succeed only "if the faculty sponsor is interested and enthusiastic". Quite true. Conversely, a successful dramatics organization rapidly deteriorates when it falls into the hands of an incompetent and indifferent sponsor. That unfortunate situation is not uncommon in our high schools, as our records over a period of twenty years clearly show.

It is not too early to begin making plans now for a banquet late this spring as the climax to your year's program in dramatics. This banquet gives you the opportunity to present awards to those students who have distinguished themselves during the season. It also gives you the opportunity to focus public attention upon the work being done by your dramatics department or club. School officials should be invited to attend your banquet.

It is most gratifying to note the number of high school dramatics groups which present plays, skits, and other forms of entertainment programs before groups and organizations in the community. We have always felt that activities of this nature distinguish the better dramatics clubs from those that are mediocre.

We are pleased with the many compliments sent us on the excellence of the photographs which appeared in our January issue. To those who took time to write us, we say "Thank you."

Spring Productions

THREE-ACT PLAYS

ROMANTIC BY REQUEST—By Ahlene Fitch. 4 m., 5 w., 1 ext. Miss Hopley of Pella, Iowa, writes after their recent production of this play: "The clever lines, different plot, surprise situations, and clean comedy make it a 'sure hit' play for high school students." Royalty \$25.00. Price 85c

TANGLED YARN—By Dagmar Vola. 5 m., 7 w., 1 int. In this delightful comedy, Camilla lies herself out of one tangled "yarn" into another until the final hilarious climax. Royalty \$10.00. Price 85c

OH SAY! DO YOU SEE?—By Byron B. Boyd. 5 m., 7 w. (extras), 1 int. A sparkling and timely comedy in which three families are brought together. Their struggles to gain their own way forms the plot for this spirited play. Royalty \$25.00. Price 85c

ONE-ACT PLAYS

SHE'S A NEAT JOB—By Richard Sturm. Comedy, 7 m., 5 w. Royalty \$5.00. Price 50c

"THE OLD GRAY MARE AIN'T"—By Boyd. Comedy, 2 m., 2 w. Royalty \$5.00. Price 50c

ANGELA'S SURPRISE—By E. M. Humphrey. Comedy, 3 m., 4 w. No royalty. Price 50c

DARK WIND—By Evelyn Neuenburg. Drama, 3 w., 1 m. Royalty \$5.00. Price 50c

FLIGHT OF THE HERONS—By M. C. Kennard. Drama, 3 m., 2 w. Royalty \$10.00. Price 50c

WEATHER OR NO—By Melvane Draheim. Comedy, 3 m., 2 w. Royalty \$5.00. Price 50c

THE ROSE GARDEN—By Frank Stacy. Comedy, 2 m., 3 w. Royalty \$5.00. Price 50c

MUSHROOMS COMING UP—By B. B. Boyd. Comedy, 6 w. No royalty. Price 50c

RED FLANNELS—By Sylpha Snook. Comedy, 4 m., 3 w. No royalty. Price 50c

THEY CANNOT RETURN—By Byron B. Boyd. Drama, 2 m., 3 w. Royalty \$10.00. Price 50c

CORN HUSK DOLL—By D. M. McDonald. Drama, 3 m., 2 w. No royalty. Price 50c

CRIPPLED HEART—By Helen White. Drama, 4 m., 2 w. Royalty \$5.00. Price 50c

New Readings

FEVER FLOWER—By Josephine Johnson. Dramatic, 9 min. Price 60c

FOR ALWAYS—By Valeria Griffith. Dramatic, 10 min. Price 60c

HENRY AND THE UNICOPTER—By Henry Weir. Humorous, 10 min. Price 60c

TRAVEL TALK—By P. L. Dodds. Humorous, 7 min. Price 40c

SAILOR BEWARE—By Richard F. Strum. Humorous, 10 min. Price 60c

POPE SPEAKS OF PEACE—By Dorothy Thompson. Oratorical, 7 min. Price 45c

ATOMIC POWER CAN BE SAFE—By H. Blakeslee. Oratorical, 6 min. Price 40c

MANY MOONS—By James Thurber. Dramatic, 10 min. Price 60c

EXILE—By Oscar Wilde. Dramatic, 10 min. Price 60c

OUR PARIS GUIDE—By Mark Twain. Humorous, 8 min. Price 35c

RICHARD II—By Wm. Shakespeare. Dramatic, 10 min. Price 60c

BOY MEETS HORSE—By B. J. Chute. Humorous, 10 min. Price 50c

FEARFUL MIRACLE—By Andrew Everly. Oratorical, 8 min. Price 50c

RUSSIA AND THE U. S. A.—By W. Lippman. Oratorical, 10 min. Price 50c

THE TOILER—By P. L. Dodds. Humorous, 7 min. Price 35c

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Mention *Dramatics*

DRAMATICS

(DRAMATICS is published by The National Thespian Society, an organization of teachers and students devoted to the advancement of dramatic arts in the secondary schools.)

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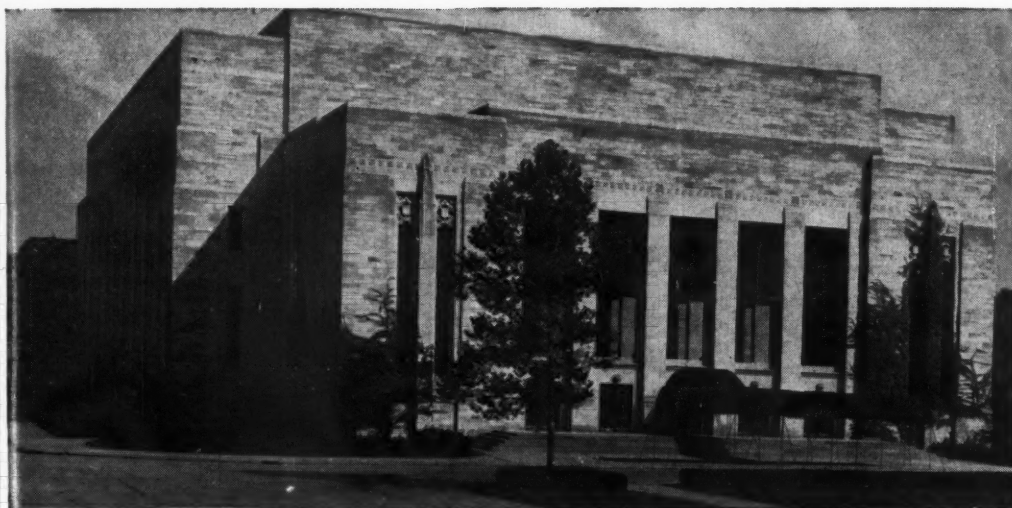
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DRAMATICS



Front view of the Theatre and Auditorium Building, Indiana University. Between 1,000 and 1,200 students and teachers are expected to gather here for the Third National Dramatic Arts Conference, June 13-18.

National Conference Highlights

By ERNEST BAVELY

Secretary-Treasurer, The National Thespian Society, Cincinnati, Ohio

AN attendance of 1,000 to 1,200 delegates consisting of high school students and dramatics directors, as well as representatives from college, community, and children's theatres, is expected for the Third National Dramatic Arts Conference sponsored by The National Thespian Society, with the cooperation of the Indiana University Theatre, at Indiana University, Bloomington, June 13, through 18.

The Conference is sponsored primarily for the advancement of dramatic arts in junior and senior high schools. The program is designed, however, to benefit educational theatre workers at all levels. While priority of registration will be enjoyed by high school students and teachers affiliated with The National Thespian Society, admission to the Conference will be open to all persons active or interested in theatre activities, including college students, alumni Thespians, parents and friends of high school students serving as

chaperons. No restrictions exist with regard to race.

Monday, June 13, will be devoted to registration for the week's program, with registration headquarters being located in the famed Indiana Union Building given to Indiana University in memory of its war dead. In this building are deposited a number of personal items belonging to Ernie Pyle, famous newspaper reporter killed in action on Okinawa in the recent war.

The conference program will get underway in the afternoon of June 31 with a tour of the beautiful Theatre and Auditorium Building which will house many of the Conference sessions. This tour will give delegates the opportunity to observe first-hand two fully equipped stages, as well as radio studios, stagecraft shops, make-up rooms, and a wide variety of other theatre facilities. The tour will come to a close at 4:00 p.m. in the Auditorium, at which time delegates will witness a one-hour film program. From 7:00 to 7:45 p.m. that evening, delegates will attend a reception in the Hall of

Murals located in the Theatre and Auditorium Building. At this reception delegates will be given the opportunity to meet officers and directors of The National Thespian Society, and members of the Conference Staff. At 8:00 p.m. the Indiana University Theatre will present the first of four full-length plays scheduled for performance during the conference week.

On the morning of Tuesday, June 14, the Conference will open with the first of four general assemblies to be addressed by outstanding personalities of the stage, screen, and radio. (Names of these speakers will be announced in our May issue). The Conference will then break up into sectional meetings on acting, directing, make-up, radio appreciation, and motion picture appreciation. The afternoon sessions will open with two demonstration performances consisting of scenes from outstanding full-length plays given by high school casts. Critiques of these performances will be given by members of the Conference staff. These scenes will be presented in East Hall, a new building with an auditorium which seats some 1,200 persons. The late afternoon session will consist of a panel discussion

This scene occurs in the production of **Everyman** which will be presented as one of four major evening performances at the Third National Dramatic Arts Conference. This production will be presented by the Theatre Department of the Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, under the direction of John H. McDowell and Charles J. McGaw. A cast and staff numbering some forty people will be involved in this show.



Third National DRAMATIC ARTS CONFERENCE

General Information

PRE-CONFERENCE ENROLLMENT. Persons planning to attend the conference are urged to enroll by mail during the months of April and May, 1949. Enrollment Forms will be provided upon request by The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio.

ENROLLMENT FEE. The enrollment fee for the entire conference program, June 13 through June 18, is \$5.00 for students and adults alike. Payment of this fee will admit one to all-conference events excepting the banquet scheduled for Friday, June 17. Persons may enroll for less than the full conference week at the rate of 50¢ per session for morning, afternoon, or evening sessions.

REFUND OF ENROLLMENT FEE. A refund of \$4.00 will be made by The National Thespian Society to persons who, after paying the enrollment fee of \$5.00, find they cannot attend the conference. This refund will be made soon after the close of the conference.

ROOM AND MEAL RATES. (Rates for High School and College Students): Indiana University will furnish lodging for five nights (Monday through Friday) at 75¢ per night, and fourteen meals (beginning with lunch on Monday, June 13, through breakfast, June 18—excepting banquet on June 17) for \$10.75, or at the rate of \$2.25 per day for three meals. The total cost for lodging and meals as indicated above is \$14.00 per student. Lodging and meal fee for the conference week is paid to Indiana University at the time of registration at Indiana University.

(Rates for Sponsors and Chaperons): Indiana University will furnish lodging at the rate of \$1.50 per day for a double room, or \$2.00 per day for a limited number of single rooms. Meals will be furnished at the rate of \$2.25 per day (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) beginning

at noon, Monday, June 13, through Saturday morning (breakfast), excepting dinner on Friday, June 17 (see Banquet below), or a total of \$10.25 for 14 meals. Double rooms have double-decked beds. Two persons will occupy one room almost throughout the dormitories. Single rooms will be available for teachers and others.

(Rates for All Other Adults): Arrangements for housing of parents and other mature persons who are not acting as sponsors or chaperons, conference staff members and speakers should be made with L. C. Smith, Manager, Indiana Union Building. Rates are \$3.00 single and \$5.00 double. Rates for the Union Club are \$2.50 single and \$4.50 double. Reservations should be made not later than May 28, 1949. Rooms cannot be held longer than two weeks before use unless a reservation fee has been paid to the Indiana Union. (Catholic Sisters and Priests who request special accommodations will be housed in the Union Building and Union Club, respectively, where arrangements can be made to keep the Sisters in a segregated area. Room rates are quoted above in this paragraph). Indiana Union and the Union Club serve meals.

CHAPERONS. All high school students attending the conference must be accompanied by an adult serving as chaperon at all times during the conference. Indiana University requires that there be one adult serving as chaperon for each group of high school students of fifteen or fewer than fifteen delegates.

FURTHER INFORMATION. Additional information concerning the conference will be gladly furnished upon request. Write to THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio.

on "What Constitutes a Well-Rounded High School Theatre Program", with the panel consisting largely of high school theatre directors, and a demonstration on "Creating Special Effects with Stage Lighting", presented by the technical staff of the Indiana University Theatre. The second major show of the Conference will be presented that evening at 8:00 p.m. by the Theatre Department of Kent State University. This group will present a complete "Showboat Theatre Program" consisting of *Ten Nights in a Barroom*, candy sale, and vaudeville show, under the direction of G. Harry Wright whose showboat MAJESTIC played to over 30,000 people on the Ohio River during last summer. This part of the Conference program will give students and directors the opportunity to see showboat entertainment as it was done half a century ago.

An equally exciting program is scheduled for Wednesday, June 15, which will open with a general assembly at 9:00 a.m. Later that morning the conference delegates will attend sectional meetings on acting, directing, make-up, radio appreciation, and motion picture appreciation. These sectional meetings will be continued on Thursday and Friday. Another

program of demonstration plays will be presented by high school groups that afternoon. Late that afternoon, directors will attend a panel discussion on "What Major Public Relations Problems Face the High School Dramatics Director". "Creating Special Effects with Stage Scenery" will be the subject of a demonstration given that same afternoon by the technical staff of the Indiana University Theatre. The day will come to a climax with an impressive performance of *EVERYMAN* pre-

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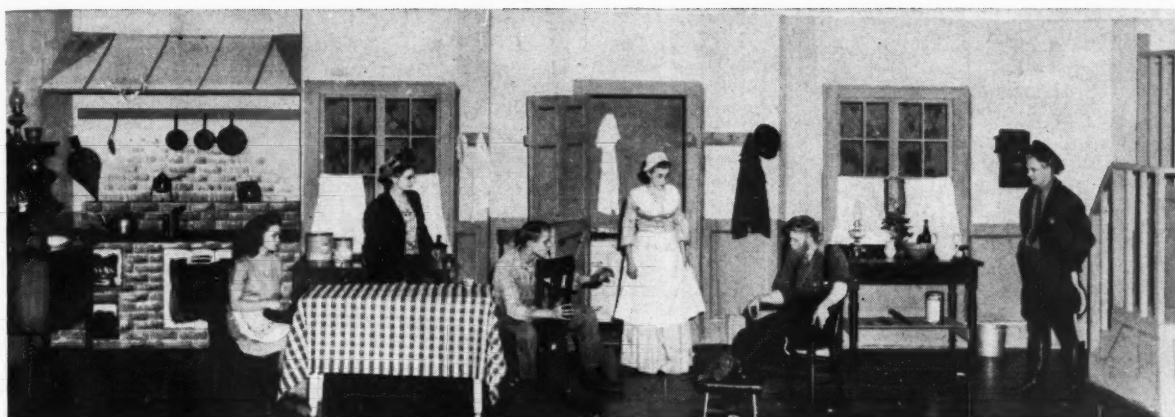
sented by a large cast of students from the Ohio State University Theatre, with John H. McDowell and Charles McGaw in charge.

The Conference program for Thursday, June 16, will get underway with a general assembly at 9:00 a.m., addressed by the third major speaker of the Conference Program. Sectional meetings will follow late in the morning, with the third and concluding series of high school demonstration performances in the early afternoon. Sectional meetings for the late afternoon will consist of a panel discussion on "Effective Ways of Advertising the High School Play" and a demonstration on "Creating Sound Effects on the Stage". The fourth and last major performances of the conference will be presented that evening at 8:00 p.m. by the Junior Civic Theatre of Indianapolis, Indiana. A children's theatre play will be presented. Those who saw the performance of *The Emperor's New Clothes* given by the Junior Civic Theatre at the 1947 Conference may look forward to seeing an equally brilliant production in June.

Friday morning, June 17, includes a general assembly program, with sectional meetings afterwards. The only attraction for the afternoon will be a "Session with the Expert", with the panel of experts consisting of various members of the Conference staff representing acting, directing, make-up, stagecraft, theatre management, radio, motion pictures, etc. The experts will first answer several questions selected from a nation-wide solicitation conducted by The National Thespian Society this spring, and then answer questions presented by members of the audience. This session will be over at 3:00 p.m., giving delegates the opportunity to relax in time for the conference banquet scheduled for 5:30-7:00. The Conference banquet, always a gala affair, will not include speakers, but a State-by-State roll call will be called. The Conference dance will follow that evening from 8:30 to 11:30 p.m., with music furnished by a popular orchestra.

Two major events are planned for the Saturday morning program, with the Conference coming to a close at noon. The first of these two events consists of a "dress rehearsal" of a radio program, with Conference students forming the cast. Students appearing in this program will be auditioned earlier in the week, with the broadcast being prepared by the Radio Department of Indiana University. The second event of the morning calls for a model Thespian induction ceremony, presented by Thespian Troupe 371 of the Seton High School of Cincinnati, Ohio.

(Note:—The Conference program, showing names of speakers, play casts, and staff members, will be published in the May issue of *DRAMATICS*. This issue will reach our readers about May 1.)



Cast for a production of *Papa Is All* at the Mount Vernon, Washington, High School (Troupe 207.) Directed by George Hodson.

Evaluating Your Festival Play

By ALLEN G. ERICKSON

Speech Department, Moorhead State Teachers College, Moorhead, Minn.

HOW are you getting on with your festival play? What can one do to get the most favorable rating? What kind of judges are they having this year? You who are coaching the one-act plays for the various festivals might well be asking each other these questions. Probably you are very much dissatisfied with the judge you had last — who must have tossed a coin to select the winner. Probably you feel that you have selected too difficult a play for your cast. Probably you thought the judge had based his decision entirely upon the audience appeal.

Can anything be done to bring some accord between coaches and judges, something that might make both their jobs easier? "Not much," the experts would say, "There is no formula for coaching or judging plays that is infallible". And of course, they are right. When we consider all the variable factors that might influence judging of plays, the talent, the play itself, the physical condition of the players (this might include the judge too), the weather, etc., we know that the problem is difficult.

However, to give the maximum polish to a play there are some fairly obvious things that can be done. Looking at the problem from the vantage point of the judge these things might be as follows:

4. COSTUMING AND MAKE-UP. Are the costumes in keeping with the mood of the play? Are the costumes in harmony with the setting and with each other? Are the costumes in harmony with the setting and with each other? Are they fairly authentic? Is your attention drawn to the actors' faces by the over-use of make-up or by the lack of it, particularly the former?

5. ENUNCIATION AND PRONUNCIATION. Do the players speak clearly so that syllables are easily heard and comprehended? Are words pronounced correctly or in keeping with the locale of the play?

6. PITCH, TEMPO, AND FLEXIBILITY OF VOICE. Are voices pitched agreeably? Is there favorable contrast in pitch and tempo? Are you conscious of too fast or slow a tempo in the dialogue of the play? Is there a speeding up of tempo in working up to climatic episodes? Do the players master the more subtle shades of expression? Is their phrasing natural and rhythmic?

7. MOOD. Can you sense the mood called for in the play? Is the mood sustained? Is use made of lighting, setting, tempo, and pitch in creating the mood?

Then there are some less obvious though certainly no less important points that one might consider:

1. RESTRAINT IN PROJECTION. Do the actors convey the impression that they have reserve power and ability? Do they work up to each minor climax and then drop the tempo as they start another phase of the action, or do they strike a high plane of intensity and hold it all through the play — exhausting themselves and the audience.

2. ANTICIPATION. Do the actors on the stage, by any movement of eye or hand, by any pause or pointless shift in position, telegraph impending action?

3. EXTRANEIOUS MOVEMENTS. Are there unnecessary movements of hands, feet, or body by anyone on the stage? Do the actors tend to keep pushing the action up stage? Do they shift about purely to create movement? Are players capable of standing still when not in the limelight — and are they capable of doing it gracefully?

(Continued on page 14)

ONE-ACT PLAY FESTIVAL SCORE SHEET

Name of Play _____ Date _____

School _____

Suggestion for scoring: Scoring items are arranged in such a way that the total number of points is 100. By rating each item and adding the numbers you will arrive at the percentage score. You may grade it as fair, good, very good, excellent and superior in the form below after computing the score.

Encircle the number that represents your evaluation. The number in parenthesis represents the maximum rating.

1. Choice of Play	(10)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. Casting	(5)	1	2	3	4	5					
3. Costuming and make-up	(5)	1	2	3	4	5					
4. Characterization	(20)	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
5. Projection	(20)	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
6. Tempo, pitch, flexibility	(10)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7. Contrast	(10)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8. Mood	(5)	1	2	3	4	5					
9. Restraint	(5)	1	2	3	4	5					
10. Blocking	(5)	1	2	3	4	5					
11. Stage business and timing	(5)	1	2	3	4	5					

Total (Add numbers encircled) _____

Fair
70-76

Good
77-82

Very good
82-86

Excellent
87-92

Superior
93-100

Judge _____

Comments:

1. CHOICE OF PLAY. Does the play have real merit? Is it challenging to the mind? Does it have opportunities for interesting interpretations? Is it beyond the capabilities of high school people?

2. CHARACTERIZATIONS OF THE ACTORS. Are the characterizations convincing? Are they able to lift you out of the "actor-audience" situation and "carry" you right into the locale of the play? Are the characterizations balanced? Are dialects and colloquialisms faithful and consistent?

3. CASTING OF PLAYERS. Has the casting been done with a genuine regard for the physical attributes necessary for each role? Has there been any regard for contrast in characters and voices?

The following is a scoring sheet that includes enough factors to insure a fairly detailed evaluation of the play. It is also easily scored.

Its advantage lies in the fact that it prevents snap judgment and decisions based upon emotional effect and audience appeal.



Scene from an original play, **Precious Caravan**, by Marion L. Stuart, presented by members of Thespian Troupe 106, Champaign, Ill., Senior High School. This represents a "cabin warming" scene, with the villagers gathered to celebrate the opening of the new home.

The Dramatic Reading

By SARA LOWREY

Chairman, Department of Speech, Baylor University, Waco, Texas

MANY people think of the dramatic reading as an extravagant display of gesture and voice in which the "reader" moves about the stage representing actions and tones of one or more characters. The purpose of such a performance appears to be a display of ones ability in characterization or in free bodily actions, extreme facial expressions, wide range of voice and undstrained emotionalization. Such "reading" has come to be anathema to people of good taste and intelligence. The reaction against such display has caused many people to shrink from the very thought of attending a speech recital or a contest featuring the dramatic reading.

Some people think of dramatic reading as the theatre or vaudeville performance of monologs or dialogs. These performances are frequently highly entertaining and sometimes represent good taste and sound techniques of acting. The best known monologists of the present theatre are Ruth Draper and Cornelia Otis Skinner. Both of these women call themselves actresses. Their purpose is to interpret characters of everyday life or of history through the dramatic monolog. Miss Draper uses a few properties and simplified stage settings. Miss Skinner frequently uses complete costumes as in *THE WIVES OF HENRY VIII*. These women are artists in the field of impersonation.

Leland Powers developed the art of impersonation in play reading and established a definite technique of impersonation. Mr. Powers acted entire plays, taking the roles of many characters with a great deal of skill in pantomime, voice and stage movement. He was known for quick changes in voice and body to represent changes in characters. The best known follower of the Leland Powers technique is Phidelah Rice who call himself a "Mon-actor."

There is a type of oral reading, frequently called "interpretative reading" in which the reader uses a book and sometimes a stand (lectern). It is the objective of the interpretative reader

to present the meaning of the printed page in such a manner that the listener shares in the process of creating ideas, moods, scenes and characters. These readers are restrained in movements and emphasize what S. S. Curry called "manifestative" gesture rather than the "representative" actions used by impersonators and actors. Manifestative actions are sometimes referred to as covert actions. Representative actions are overt. The interpretative reader usually considers suggestive actions and tones preferable to literal representation. The best known of these readers is Gertrude E. Johnson who says,

"The reader must not be confused with the impersonator. Impersonators act out their parts, although they are alone on the stage. They are approaching the brains of their audience from the same standpoint as the actor. . . . In a play, the audience is intended to see the march of events with its physical eyes. In reading, the audience must see nothing with its eyes which detracts from its mental vision."

Interpretative reading is not limited to the so-called "dramatic" literature but may draw from all types of literature: poetry, novels, stories, essays as well as monologs, dialogs and plays.

Somewhere in between interpretative reading and acting may be found the memorized recitation. The techniques of this form range all the way from the restrained manner of interpretative reading to the literal movements of impersonation.

The question arises: Can interpretative reading be called "dramatic reading"? Is interpretative reading dramatic when the reader chooses a play for his medium and not dramatic when he reads a poem or essay? What about the reading of a short story or a cutting from a novel?

Webster's New International Dictionary defines the word "dramatic" as, "Of or pertaining to drama; vivid, expressed with or as if with action." By these definitions the extremely

liberal person might consider interpretative reading as dramatic reading, since interpretative reading may be quite vivid in its projection of ideas and emotion and it may suggest actions to the minds of the listeners. The difference between interpretative reading and that which is usually termed, "dramatic reading" is in the suggested as opposed to the literal. This difference lies not only in the reader's technique but in the attitude stimulated in the audience. In interpretative reading the audience is stimulated to create with the reader. In the so-called "dramatic reading" the audience sits and watches the show. In recalling the experience of interpretative reading the audience is likely to recall the imaginative experiences suggested by the literature rather than the manner of the reader. Whereas, in the more literal performance the audience will probably recall the gestures and tones of the "reader."

I shall never forget the dramatic scenes I created as I sat in the audience and listened to Gertrude E. Johnson read *The Ivory Door*, by A. A. Milne. At a later time I saw the play produced by a company of actors. The memory of the scenes created during the reading by Gertrude E. Johnson are more vivid in my memory at the present time and more satisfying to me than the memory of the scenes presented by the actors. Perhaps it is because Gertrude E. Johnson is a finer artist than the group of actors I saw in the play. Perhaps, however, the act of creative imagination sometimes makes a deeper impression than that which one witnesses through the senses. This experience lends support to the idea that interpretative reading may be a dramatic experience for an audience and leave as vivid a memory as a more literal form of art. I recall how on that occasion the reader seemed to disappear and the scenes and characters became vivid in my imagination as Miss Johnson spoke the words and suggested the actions in a restrained manner.

There are six elements which are considered dramatic elements. These dramatic elements are: *character, plot, setting, action, suspense, and conflict*. One or more of these dramatic elements may be present in any oral reading. The conflict may be within the mind of the character rather than between two characters. The conflict in the

drama of ideas is always more an inner conflict than one between two characters. Oscar Wilde in his discussion of Browning and Shakespeare suggests that Browning is as dramatic as Shakespeare though the dramatic conflict is within the soul of the character. Wilde states "He (Browning) made the soul the protagonist of life's tragedy and looked on action as the one undramatic element of the play." Thus Wilde explains why Browning's plays did not meet with success on the stage. We find, however, that Browning's dramatic monologs, plays and other poems are challenging for the field of dramatic reading. In fact oral reading often gives the key to an understanding of the poetry of Browning. He is a vigorous poet who gives abrupt and dramatic changes leaving some sentences incomplete with the choppy rhythm of everyday conversation. To stage the poetry of Browning, however, is likely to miss the very essence of his meaning. Hence, *interpretative* reading which *suggests* rather than *depicts* may project the dramatic elements of the poetry of Browning more vividly to the minds of the audience than the literal actions of the stage. This same principle applies to poetry and is likely to be true also for the reading of stories and plays.

Teachers of oral interpretation are coming more and more to appreciate the dramatic qualities of subjective techniques and to discount the literal elements of the stage as techniques of dramatic reading. Jane Herendeen says:

"But drama itself has primarily to do with states of consciousness—their changes, their contacts, and their clashes."²

"It is inevitable that there should be quite a different use of pantomime in interpretative reading from that used in stage production. The actor . . . is at liberty to dance or run or kneel or sit or indeed to leave the stage as realistic presentation demands. Not so with the reader . . . His pantomime is more restrained, more suggestive, more subtle. He communicates by implication."³

Woolbert and Nelson observe:

"And what of the contestant who competes in reading contests? He should INTERPRET unless everyone concerned has agreed that the contestant shall impersonate. He should not

act. His interpretation should reflect sincerity instead of studied imitation. The exhibitionism of the typical "contest reader" certainly originates with the teacher who has not been trained in purposeful interpretation and consequently does not know what constitutes good taste, not only in interpretation but also in impersonation."⁴

Mary Margaret Robb states:

"The most important single influence upon the methods used in teaching Elocution was that exerted by the new psychology; emphasis is now upon mental processes . . . The great interest in the mind and in the outward manifestations of its activities diverted the attention of the teachers of speech from the emphasis established by the preceding period on physiology and the mechanism of the voice."⁵

"The methods used at the present time continue to show the influence of psychology. The teaching of Oral Interpretation of Literature has become more specialized. More attention is given to the appreciation of literature and to the aesthetic aspects of the subject than ever before."⁶

Wayland Maxfield Parrish supports this idea with a statement from a well-known teacher of English literature:

"It (public reading) has been so grievously abused that one hesitates to say any thing that might encourage it. The late Edward Dowden once wrote, 'Few persons nowadays seem to feel how powerful an instrument of culture may be found in modest, intelligent, and sympathetic reading aloud.' . . . A mongrel something which, at least with the inferior adepts, is neither good reading nor yet veritable acting, but which sets agape the half-educated with the wonder of its airs and attitudinising, its pseudo-heroics and pseudo-pathos, has usurped the place of the true art of reading aloud, and has made the word 'recitation' a terror to quiet folk who are content with intelligence and refinement."⁷

In conclusion, I would suggest that the student preparing a dramatic reading would be wise to consider carefully the relative value of the subjective elements of interpretative reading as opposed to the more literal techniques of acting. As a reader and teacher I have searched for the technique of reading which captures the interest and attention of the audience on the matter related and not upon the manner of the reader. I agree with Sarett and Foster that "audiences are influenced largely by signs of which they are unaware"⁸. The fault of some dramatic

Designing Scenery for the Stage

By A. S. Gillette

A reprint of the series of seven articles by Professor Gillette published last season in DRAMATICS MAGAZINE. A practical source of authoritative information for theatre workers at all educational levels. Price, 50¢ THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY College Hill Station Cincinnati 24, Ohio

reading appears to be that the reader attempts to influence the audience by signs which are obvious, hence, the audience is aware of the readers methods—his actions, tones and articulation. This awareness frequently causes members of the audience to say the reader was affected.

Some techniques of dramatic reading which are unobtrusive and of which the audience may not be aware of are: imagery (whereby the reader pictures scenes rather than acting them out), rhythm (one of the subtlest ways of creating audience interest), variety in tempo, tone and pitch which suggests subtly the changes in mood and intensity. These subjective techniques may enable the reader to direct the attention of the audience to the imaginative situation rather than to the reader's own actions and tones. Thus, the reader disappears for the time-being from the consciousness of the audience, whose concentration is upon the dramatic experience rather than upon the performance as such. Such readers may be said to have learned "the art which conceals its artistry." Hence, they appear natural to the audience. It seems as if the greatest compliment the public can pay an artist is, "He did it with ease; there was no apparent effort."

- (1) Gertrude E. Johnson, MODERN LITERATURE FOR ORAL INTERPRETATION, New York; D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1930, p. 13.
- (2) Jane Herendeen, SPEECH QUALITY AND INTERPRETATION, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1946, p. 236.
- (3) Ibid, p. 259.
- (4) Charles H. Woolbert and Severina E. Nelson, THE ART OF INTERPRETATIVE SPEECH, New York, F. S. Crofts & Co., 1945, p. 6.
- (5) Mary Margaret Robb, ORAL INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE IN AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, New York; The H. W. Wilson Co., 1941, p. 142.
- (6) Ibid, p. 219.
- (7) Wayland Maxfield Parrish, READING ALOUD, New York; Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1941, pp. 27-28.
- (8) Lew Sarett and William T. Foster, BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SPEECH, New York; Houghton Mifflin Co., 1946, p. 22.



Scene from an extremely popular production of **Bottoms Up** as given by members of Troupe 468 of the Franklin School, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Directed by Ethel Roberg. (Photograph by Wm. C. Wallace.)

Molding with Make-Up

By CARL B. CASS

School of Drama, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma

IN the four preceding articles of this series, we have been principally concerned with the techniques of applying grease paints. Now, we turn our attention to other techniques which are similar, in terms of effect, to those of sculpturing.

If a plastic could be devised, by means of which a person could easily remodel his whole head and face without obliterating his facial expression, it would, of course, be the ideal make-up material. Hollywood make-up specialists have developed a number of plastic materials for general sale — one reason being that the process of application is too long and complicated to be of practical value for stage use.

There are, however, a few make-up materials in general use by stage actors which have the effect of changing the apparent shape of the head and the size and relative proportion of facial features. Use of these materials tend to disguise the actor; and, if they are applied skillfully, they may be very effective in helping to create the proper impression of a stage character.

Hair

Hair, both real and false, is the commonest material used in molding the apparent shape of the head and in modifying the impression of facial outline.

Everyone is familiar with the startling effect that a girl may gain by "putting up" her hair for the first time. The fact that such an effect is so startling should illustrate the extreme importance of hair styling as a function of make-up. Any actress should be able to dress her own hair in all the styles appropriate to the roles that she may have the opportunity to play. She should know not only which styles are the most attractive, but also which are the most appropriate to characters of different personalities.

First Lesson

(Recommended to Girls)

Objective — To improve the student's knowledge of hair styling.

Procedure. Clip from all available periodicals, pictures illustrating striking or unusual coiffures. Organize these pictures both in terms of the apparent ages of the people represented and in terms of the shapes of the faces, and paste them in a scrap-book. The shapes of faces may be roughly classified as: oval, round, heart-shaped, square, and long. Movie magazines should be an excellent source of pictures illustrating particularly the most glamorous styles of hair dressing, since Hollywood hair stylists are among the best in the world; although unfortunately, the conventions of the motion picture industry lead to an over emphasis of glamour often to the detriment of true character delineation.

Having assembled a good scrap-book of illustrations, a girl should practice

as much as possible dressing her own hair in different styles and observing carefully the effects of each. Whenever they are available, hair switches, extra braids, false curls, and rats should be used to supplement one's own hair.

The Use of Wigs. Occasionally, a wig or transformation may be used to completely cover a girl's hair. A good transformation is usually effective, but a wig, put on over the mass of one's own hair, is apt to be so bulky that it will appear entirely out of proportion.

The relative shortness of a man's hair makes hair styling relatively unimportant to male actors, but good wigs may be worn very effectively. Very cheap, badly fitted, or poorly dressed wigs will, of course, look atrociously artificial or "wiggy." But very good wigs may be obtained from reputable wig makers at rental prices ranging from two to ten dollars per week. Such wigs are available in a great variety of sizes and colors and in the amounts and lengths of hair. Even special padded wigs may be obtained and used to enlarge or change the shape of the head.

Hair-Cuts for Male Actors. There should be a standing rule among all amateur male actors that forbids all hair-cuts within two weeks of a production opening; and hair at the sides of the head should never be clipped short within a month of a production. Crew hair-cuts, on the other hand, are an abomination that should be forbidden altogether except for those playing certain unattractive roles.

Beards and Mustaches. False whiskers of all colors, shapes and sizes are obtainable ready-made from wig makers or costumers. Except, however, for very long beards or any type of whisker that must be put on or removed very rapidly, crepe hair is much more practical for general use.

Crepe hair is a type of false hair that may be purchased by the yard. It is usually bound tightly with two strings in a sort of a zig-zag braid. Any hair removed from this braid will be kinky or fuzzy and will need to be straightened before using. To straighten crepe hair, one has only to remove the strings from the braid, dip the hair in water, squeeze out the water, and stretch the hair to dry. The crepe hair must be held straight during the drying process. One effective method is that of winding the hair around a hot radiator. A faster method is that of pressing the damp hair with a hot flatiron.

Any beard or mustache should be applied to the face after the rest of the make-up is complete and powdered. If soft grease paint is used as sparingly as it should be, there is no reason to avoid applying it to areas to be covered by crepe hair. In fact, some grease paint helps to protect the skin from the slight smarting effect of the spirit gum which is used to fasten the crepe hair to the face.

Application of Crepe Hair — Although beards and mustaches that may be created out of crepe hair are greatly varied in size and shape, the process of application may always be divided into the four following steps:

1. **Application of Spirit Gum** — This process is mentioned first because the spirit gum — except when it is old and thick — should be applied a minute or two before the crepe hair is ready for application. Spirit gum is merely painted on the exact area of the face to be covered with crepe hair. If the area is too large to be covered all at once, it will be advisable to paint only part of the whole area with spirit gum and apply hair to this part, then apply spirit gum to another part and cover it with crepe hair and so on until the entire area is covered.

2. **Combing Out the Crepe Hair** — Hold a strong comb with the teeth upward in your right hand — if you are right handed — and the string of straightened crepe hair in your left hand. Then, with the thumb of the right hand, force the crepe hair (about one inch from the end of the string) down into the teeth of the comb. Next, holding the string of crepe hair at a point about one foot from the comb, pull it free of the comb. This should leave a small clump of crepe hair fibers in the comb. Repeat this process until enough crepe hair is accumulated in the comb to cover the area you wish to cover first. Then remove this crepe hair from the comb and, with a sharp pair of scissors, cut off the snarled part of the clump that formed on the right side of the comb. The angle of this cut will depend upon the angle at which the hair is to be applied to the face.

3. **Applying the Crepe Hair** — This is a process requiring a degree of hand and finger skill that can be developed only through practice. The object is to apply the clump of crepe hair to the exact area to be covered so that the end of each individual fiber will become imbedded in the spirit gum. The crepe hair fibers should be evenly distributed over the area and they should be set on the face at the proper angle. Near the point of the chin, the hair fibers should be relatively dense or close together; while, on the front and sides of the face, the fibers should be relatively sparse. In all areas, however, special care must be taken to avoid a patchy or spotty application.

Under the chin, the hair fibers must be applied at right angles to the skin; but on the front and sides of the face, the fibers must be applied at an angle that permits them to hang naturally towards the point of the chin.

The first of the drawings below illustrates how a full beard and mustache can be applied in eight parts — one under the chin, one on the front of the chin, two on each cheek, and two on the upper lip. The number of clumps of hair applied is unimportant since each of

the areas indicated may be subdivided to suit the skill or convenience of the person applying the crepe hair. But the angle at which each clump is applied and the relative density of each clump is very important.

As indicated, the clump to be applied to the front of the chin is cut on the bias so that it may be pressed on at the right angle and so that the ends of all fibers can be embedded in the spirit gum. The clumps of crepe hair to be applied to the cheek areas should be similarly cut. Although, after handling crepe hair for some time, a person may learn to roll the fibers between his fingers in such a way as to avoid the necessity of cutting them on the bias.

The second, third, and fourth drawings below illustrate methods of applying different types of mustaches. The second drawing illustrates the commonest variety with the hair slanting downward and cut to any desired length. The third drawing shows a waxed mustache. For such a mustache, apply first two small tufts of crepe hair near the center of the lip—each tuft slanting slightly toward the outer corners of the mouth. Cut each tuft to the desired length. Then squeeze the brush from the spirit gum bottle between thumb and index finger of one hand; and, between this same thumb and finger, twirl the free end of one of the tufts while holding the upper end securely on the lip with a finger of the other hand. The spirit gum from the thumb and finger will stick the crepe hair together into a sharp spike which can be glued to the lip at the exact angle desired. Repeating the same process on the other tuft of crepe hair will complete the mustache.

The fourth drawing illustrates the method of applying a "handle-bar" mustache. This represents a combination of the other two methods, since the central part of the mustache is cut short leaving only a long tuft of crepe hair at each end. These tufts are then twirled in spirit gum and glued down in the same manner as for the waxed mustache.

4. Trimming the Crepe Hair — Many people make the error of molding crepe hair into the desired form and then expecting it to keep its form. Crepe hair fibers are much too fine to remain in any molded form. They must be clipped into the desired shape very carefully. In clipping a beard for example, one should not only pull out loose hair and clip the remaining hair from side to side and from back to front and continue clipping until the beard retains its shape in spite of rough handling. Only then can he count on the beard holding its shape on stage.

A Stubble Beard — There are three ways of gaining the unshaven effect of a stubble beard. The simplest method is merely that of darkening the bearded area with a drak blue or brown lining color. The most difficult method is that of applying a full beard and cutting it short. A rather simple means of applying a stubble beard, which must be seen at a distance to be appreciated, consists of merely applying a type of granulated smoking tobacco, such as Bull Durham, over spirit gum.

Application of Nose Putty

Nose putty is an adhesive plastic material that can be molded over the nose or any other immobile feature. It is not elastic and, consequently, cannot be used effectively over those areas of the skin that are stretched by the

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put on before the application of any cold cream or grease paint. If the skin is naturally oily, or if there is danger of the putty's being loosened by perspiration, the spirit gum may be applied to any area to be covered by the putty. When the spirit gum is completely dry, it forms a hard waterproof shell over the skin to which the nose putty will adhere very securely.

Before application, nose putty must be softened by kneading it with the fingers. A thin film of cold cream covering the fingers will prevent the putty from sticking to them. When the nose putty is soft and pliable, one may simply apply it to the desired area and mold it as he chooses. Finally, grease paint is applied over the putty and the face to give a consistent basic color.

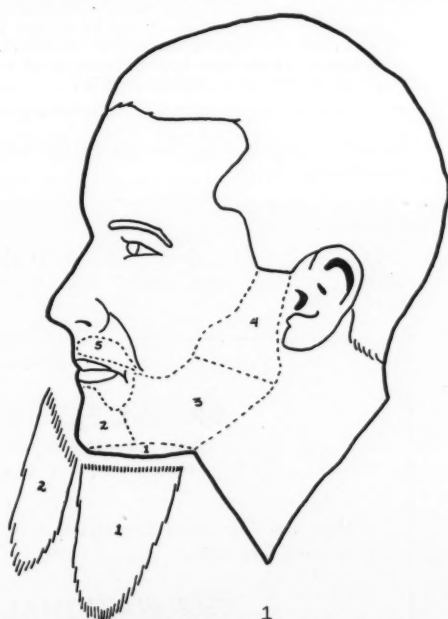
Students usually have trouble trying to keep putty confined to a definite minimum area. As one molds putty, he tends to keep pressing it towards the edges; and the edges keep spreading over a larger and larger area. In order to avoid this tendency, press the borders of the putty application down first to a feather edge before attempting to mold it; then in molding press the putty away from the edges rather than towards them.

Other Methods of Molding

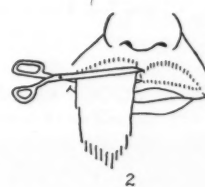
Teeth may be molded with gutta-percha, which is a white rubber compound used by dentists for temporary fillings. One has merely to heat the gutta-percha over a candle flame and mold it over a tooth that has been thoroughly cleaned and dried.

A sunken scar may be created by painting it on the face (before grease paint or cold cream) with non-flexible collodion. As the collodion dries it shrinks and forms a hard colorless scale deeply indented into the skin.

Occasionally, an actor may wish to pad his lips or cheeks by inserting some material into the mouth and under the lips or cheeks. Strips of rubber or



Four drawings which illustrate methods of applying beards and mustaches. See directions in column one.



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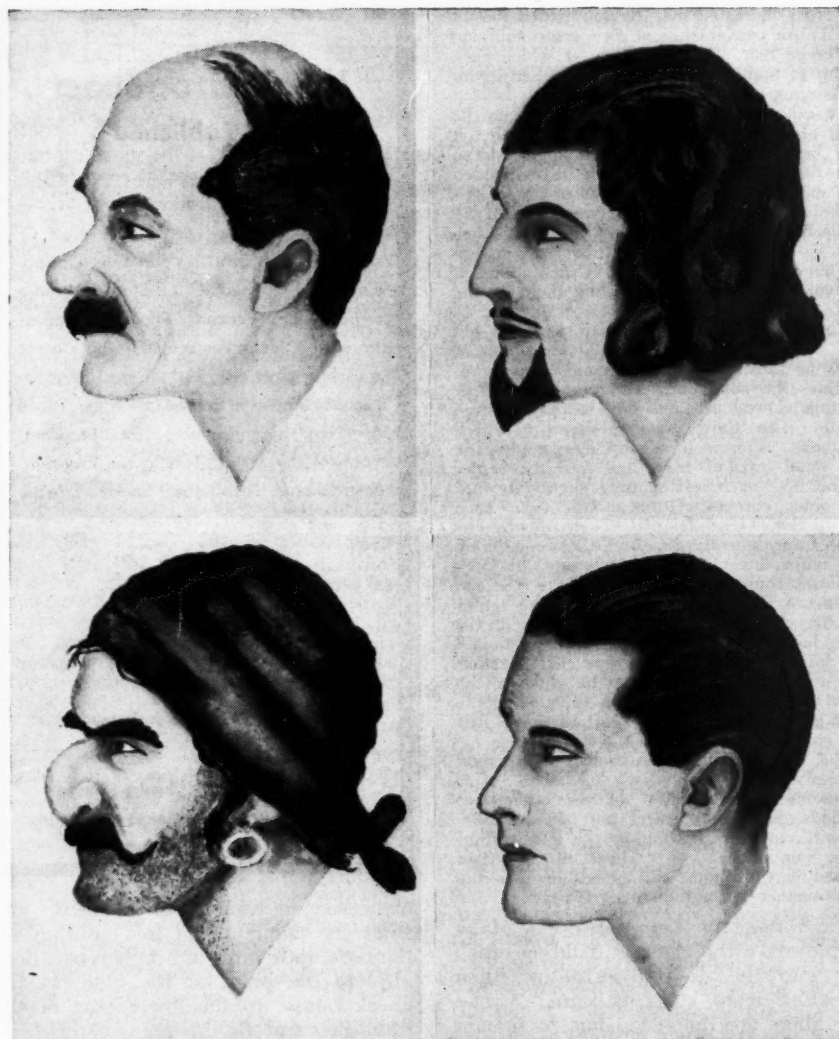
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Mention Dramatics



These photographs of greasepaint portraits illustrate how a profile may be altered by means of hair and nose putty. The first picture at the top is that of a modern character with bald wig, raised eyebrows, bulbous putty nose, and a large, straight mustache. The second picture at the top is that of an Elizabethan character with high straight nose, wig, beard, and mustache. The picture in the lower left hand corner is that of a pirate with beaked putty nose, low and jutting crepe hair eyebrows, handle-bar mustache, unshaven jaw, and a few whips of tangle hair bound to the head with a turban. The picture in the lower right-hand corner is that of a normal profile.

pieces of apple are the materials most commonly used.

Second Lesson

Objective — To gain practice in the application of nose putty and crepe hair.

Procedure — Attempt to make up yourself or others to gain effects similar to the characters pictured here. Also make up other characters using other types of noses, beards, mustaches, etc.

The next article in this series will deal with the disposition or personality of stage characters as indicated by means of make-up.

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Mention Dramatics

DRAMATICS

Purposes of Children's Theatre Plays

By KENNETH L. GRAHAM

University of Minnesota Theatre, Minneapolis, Minnesota

"What play shall we produce for our Children's Theatre?" "What are good plays for children's audiences?" Every director who has had the assignment of staging a play for a child audience has more than once been confronted with these questions. How simple it would be if there were a concrete "yardstick" against which one might place a proposed script to see if it measured up as it should, but, unfortunately, such is not available. Extensive research must be conducted with many child audiences reviewing many different plays supposedly designed for children before an approach can be made to any such "yardstick".

Does this mean there is no possible help one can find for judging a play for a child audience? Are all the problems involved so controversial that one guess is as good as another? Fortunately, the answer to both of these questions is "No".

Although recognized as vital in the selection of plays for children's theatre, the practical considerations of cost, space, time element for production, difficulties of production, royalties, and variety on a season's program will not be covered here. Indeed, such practical considerations plus the occasion for which the play is to be staged are all too often the only bases used for judging a play. In one sense, the problems to be discussed here begin where such practical considerations end, i. e. after the practical problems have been settled, the questions still remain; "Is the play suitable for and appealing to children?" "Is it a good play and will children enjoy it?"

An extensive survey was made recently by the writer of the testimony

*A "children's theatre" is understood here to be one managed and directed by adults and one whose goal is the presentation of the finest possible dramatic productions for audiences of children. Casts may be composed of children or adults or (and usually) a combination of both — the plays being presented primarily for the benefit of the child audience and not for the benefit of training the actors.

(1) of individuals who have been, or are now, active in the children's theatre movement — children's dramatists, directors and producers of children's theatre plays, and dramatic critics who have dealt with children's plays and the development of children's theatre in the United States, and (2) of individuals whose major interest is in some other field — child psychology, aesthetics — which extend into the field of children's drama.

A systematic inquiry into the opinions seemingly best qualified was made to explore the areas of agreement in an attempt to find the basic and specific criteria which would afford the practitioner in the field of children's theatre a set of standards for writing or selecting the best possible children's drama. These were found to be of two major groupings: (1) the basic purpose which children's plays should fulfill, and (2) the special dramatic techniques which should be applied to such plays.

The Basic Purposes of Children's Plays

The general consensus appears to be that a children's play should first and foremost provide entertainment, although this purpose is sometimes taken for granted and at other times it is ignored. Children's entertainment should not be considered as mere amusement, but also as thought and mental occupation — in an agreeable and refreshing way. Entertainment may be considered the child's consciousness that he is having or has had a good time, and dramatically speaking, may be said to be the child's identification with a personality in a situation he can comprehend. No individual has ever advocated that a children's play should

not be entertaining, but warning has been advanced that this objective should not be considered alone. The purpose of entertainment might best be said to be a prerequisite to all other objectives for a children's play, for rightly conceived they will always incorporate entertaining qualities.

The second basic purpose appears to be the imaginative vicarious fulfillment or satisfaction of certain basic psychological needs. These needs have been expressed in the following ways:

- ... the desire to see the abstract pictures of the imagination realized in concrete form.
- ... the craving for a conception of life higher than the actual world.
- ... the propensity to express the larger life of the race in the individual.
- ... the craving for excitement, love of excursions into the world of the imagination.
- ... an outlet for the natural drives for adventure and excitement.
- ... the need to enter worlds larger than their own and there encounter people different from themselves.
- ... the need to experience emotions that might not be evoked in everyday living.
- ... push of the "ego" which finds its vent vicariously.
- ... the imaginative satisfaction of "ego" and mutuality needs of the growing child.

The realization of these desires, cravings, propensities and needs by way of make-believe or imagination appears to be vital and essential to the healthy personality; and since drama furnishes a most impressive means of such vicarious realizations, it may be concluded that a fundamental objective of all children's plays should be the fulfillment of these psychological needs.

A third objective of a children's play, which has been widely advocated in either the broad or narrow sense, is the providing of education; although there is much disagreement in the interpretation of this purpose. It was the educational purpose which seemingly gave rise to the development of children's theatre plays in the United States. In the earliest writings on the subject, the broad view of this objective was usually implied — such as, "the teaching of things of the heart and spirit not contained in text-books", "ex-

Scene from the production of *Heidi* given by the Young People's Theatre of the University of Minnesota, with Kenneth L. Graham as director. The set was designed by Tom Russell. The version was dramatized by Lucille Miller from the story of Johanna Spyri.



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emptyfying the rigid connection between men's moral natures and their fortunes" — but the emphasis was always placed on the possibilities and advantages of instruction. This stress took the form of teaching morals and promoting good conduct, teaching some dominant truth, giving the child better ethical standards, teaching patriotism, and teaching reverence for useful tradition and religion. Drama for children soon became "educational dramatics" and was used in the schools (and still is to a very great extent) as a means of teaching everything from language to hygiene by way of the dramatization of the various subjects, often resulting simply in perfunctory dialogue. Drama as a theatrical art was passed over lightly.

This is the danger involved in simply stating that children's plays should provide education. For when such a statement stands alone — not prefixed by the fact that a children's play must be entertaining and also fulfill the psychological needs of the child — and is not accompanied by an explanation of how the educational purpose is to be interpreted, it often gives rise to the conception that the prime purpose of the children's play is to instruct in some direct way. The resultant plays may be utilizing dramatic appeal as a means of instruction, but from the standpoint of drama, they are a perversion of the art and certainly do not illustrate what has come to be generally accepted as the purpose of education in a children's theatre play.

Those who have advocated the educational purpose in a broader sense,

however, fully realize the fact that plays devoid of any meaning are usually not the most desirable. Yet at the same time it is understood that a children's play must above all be a true play in the dramatic sense and that it must be entertaining and satisfying to the child. As Yasha Frank has stated, "Children love to learn but hate to be taught". A children's theatre play, therefore, should not obviously instruct but should give the child a chance to learn.

Such a chance to learn involves the identification of the child with the protagonist and other characters in the play by which the child's sympathies are aroused, and (needless to say) are worthily aroused, because of the situations involved. Even though children do not talk about them, these experiences should be woven into the children's play. The educational purpose of a children's play should be met by providing a wide variety of experiences wherein children can identify themselves with characters in situations that make concrete an estimation of some vital phase, or phases of life.

A fourth purpose, really a corollary of the educational objective, appears to be the training of future adult audiences. In order to raise the standards by which future audiences will judge and appreciate drama, children's plays must so stimulate the imaginations of and so develop an appreciation for fine plays in the present generation that they will grow into audiences of tomorrow who will demand only the best in drama.

Briefly, it may be said, that the following separate, but inter-related basic purposes should be fulfilled by children's theatre plays.

1. Children's plays should, by presenting opportunities for children to identify themselves with personalities in situations they can comprehend, provide pleasant, interesting, and worthwhile entertainment.
2. Children's plays should, by providing a wide range of imaginative, vicarious experiences, satisfy the psychological needs of the growing personalities of children.
3. Children's plays should not obviously instruct, but should, by presenting experiences wherein children can identify themselves with characters in situations which make concrete an estimation of some vital phase (or phases) of life, provide opportunity for the child to learn sympathetic understanding of people and the reasons for the commonly accepted ideals characteristic of American life.
4. Children's plays should, by meeting the foregoing purposes and conforming to the fundamental accepted standards of dramatic technique, train the present generation so that they will become intelligent, critical, and appreciative adult audiences of the future.

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Mention Dramatics

Showboat Theatre's Second Pioneer

By G. HARRY WRIGHT

Department of Drama, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

AFTER Captain French, the next name to come into the showboat story is Captain E. A. Price. Although he was one of the most successful of river showmen, he was also one of the most mysterious. Of his personal appearance and peculiarities of temperament we know a great deal, for he was the most striking character ever to walk the deck of a showboat. Everybody who knew him has a fund of stories to tell about him. But we have little exact information concerning his activities.

This is because he was an extremely cautious man who refused to tell his business even to his closest associates. He feared publicity, and never granted interviews or permitted his employees to talk for publication. He kept very meager records, and his logs and day books did not even contain his name or the name of his boat. Probably he feared that they would fall into unfriendly hands.

Captain Price first enters our story on that fateful day in 1882 when his tiny floating photograph gallery, the SILVAN GLEN, was struck and damaged by the NEW SENSATION in a windstorm at St. Marys, W. Va.

As noted in a previous article, sharp-eyed little Captain Price was quick to see the money-making possibilities in showboat business, and as a result of his accidental meeting with French, he bought an interest in the NEW SENSATION. The photograph gallery and showboat were lashed together and traveled the rivers, taking pictures by day and giving shows by night. Price was a welcome addition to the SENSATION company, for he was a comical character (although he did not know it) and a piano player of considerable ability. The sight of the bandy-legged little photographer scampering down the aisle to the orchestra pit, clawing at his mutton-chop whiskers with one hand and scratching his leg with the other, was one of the funniest things that the showboat had to offer.

Captain Price had one annoying habit, however. When the SENSATION had a run of bad business, he would sell his interest back to French. Then, the next season, he would buy in again. This went on for several years until Captain French became tired of it. Sid Allen tells the story of the last deal of this kind.

It was in 1885. Captain Price, in line with his frugal custom, sold his interest back to Captain French as the SENSATION neared New Orleans. He went on to the city, leaving his belongings aboard and making arrangements to pick them up on his way back up the river. In a few days a steamboat, bound upstream, landed at the town where the SENSATION was playing, just at show time. Price hurried off the steamboat and hurried up the

stageplank of the SENSATION, to find the show boat packed to the guards with customers. Instantly one hand flew to his whiskers while the other fumbled nervously for his wallet. He wanted to buy a share in the SENSATION again. But Captain French refused.

That incident put Captain Price in the showboat business for good. For the following season he came out with his own boat, PRICE'S FLOATING OPERA; and during the next forty-two years a series of floating theatres bore the name of Price on practically every navigable stream of the Mississippi system.

Price's first showboat was a "floater" similar to the original NEW SENSATION, with no tug or other means of propulsion except sweeps or oars. Whether he had two boats called the FLOATING OPERA or three, is not known. Certain it is that he soon replaced his original boat with a larger one, and obtained a sizeable steamboat to tow her.

From the little evidence that we have, it seems that Price played about the same territory in the early years that French did. The French log for the years 1886-1889 mentions encountering the FLOATING OPERA on the Ohio,

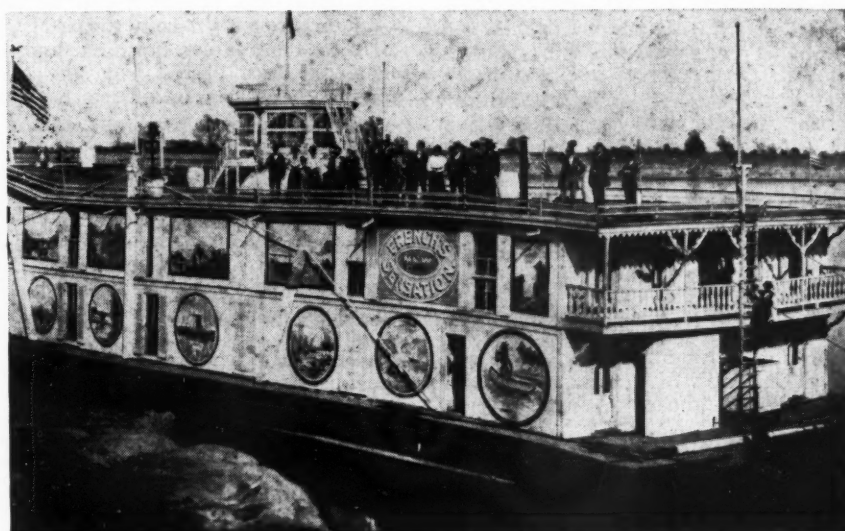
the Mississippi, and the Kanawha. And apparently the shows given were of the variety type, made up of singing, dancing, acrobatics, character comedy, and other specialties. Contemporaries report that Price's early shows were "cheap but clean."

From a daily cash book kept by Captain Price covering the years 1892 to 1897 which has survived, we learn that the FLOATING OPERA during that period played the Monongahela, Ohio, Muskingum, Green, Cumberland, Lower Mississippi rivers, Bayou Lafourche and Bayou Teche.

Just before the turn of the century Captain Price introduced a young man to showboat business who was to become one of the great river showmen — some say the greatest of them all. His name was originally Ralph Waldo Emerson Gaches but, after the manner of showmen, he dropped the troublesome Gaches, and became Ralph W. Emerson. His exploits will not be related at this point, but it is necessary to mention him because of his connection with Captain Price's career.

Price was playing the upper Ohio, and needed a pilot for the down-river trip. Young Emerson applied for, and secured the job. At Cincinnati, Emerson came to the end of the territory for which his pilot's license was good, and it seemed that his connection with the FLOATING OPERA would end as suddenly as it had begun. But Captain Price had taken a liking to the brilliant young man, so he offered him a job as advance man. Emerson accepted, and soon became a partner.

In 1900 Captain Price bought the NEW SENSATION No. 1 from Captain French and renamed her the OLYMPIA. Almost immediately she became involved in an accident and sank at Leavenworth, Indiana. Captain Price had her raised and repaired and re-



This is a later picture of the fourth NEW SENSATION (SENSATION No. 2) taken after Capt. French had had pictures painted on the sides of the boat. The end nearer the camera is the stern. Bow of the towboat can be seen in lower right corner.

The following caption, written by Clarkie McNair, appears on the back of the original picture from which this one was copied:

"This is French's SENSATION No. 2 after all the decorations were added. This is the boat I remember most vividly. In 1897 'UNCLE TOM'S CABIN' was produced on this stage and I, at the ripe old age of 6 was the 'Little Eva'. It is the only time the French's SENSATIONS ever attempted anything but straight vaudeville. This picture was made about 1899."

named her the **WATER QUEEN**. Emerson, now a partner, became manager of the boat.

A few years later Price and Emerson, while playing on the Bayou Lafourche, came across a small showboat called **LIGHTNER'S FLOATING PALACE**. The little minstrel show aboard, composed of only five or six performers, was extremely popular with the "Cajun" audiences, because the performers could tell their jokes in the bayou language. Price and Emerson bought the boat, remodeled her, and renamed her the **NEW ERA FLOATING PALACE**. At the end of the season Emerson sold his interest in the **NEW ERA** to Wiley P. McNair, but Captain Price retained his half interest.

In 1905 Emerson sold his interest in the **WATER QUEEN** to Captain Price and bought the **NEW GRAND FLOATING PALACE** from W. R. Markle. The **NEW GRAND FLOATING PALACE** showboats that were built at Parkersburg, West Virginia, between 1900 and 1910. She was far in advance of any other boat afloat at that time. She was 40 by 150 feet in dimensions, and seated 850 persons.

At the end of two more seasons Emerson sold the **NEW GRAND FLOATING PALACE** to Captain Price, who promptly renamed her the **GREATER NEW YORK**. In the meantime, Captain Price had bought the fifth and last **FRENCH'S NEW SENSATION** from Calie French and John McNair in 1907.

This is rather intricate and confusing, isn't it? But it all must be told, to make the record complete and to indicate the growth of Captain Price's interests. By 1908 the funny little man who had played the piano for Captain French was sole owner of three showboats — the **WATER QUEEN**, **FRENCH'S NEW SENSATION** (the name "French" had been sold with the boat), and the **GREATER NEW YORK**. He was also half owner of the **NEW ERA**.

In 1910 Captain Price sold his half interest in the **NEW ERA** to Wiley P. McNair, making that gentleman sole owner of the boat. The **WATER QUEEN** he sold to Roy Hyatt.

Along about 1917 Captain Price bought a small but extremely well-appointed showboat named the **AMERICAN** from Captain Emerson, renamed her the **COLUMBIA**, and put his son, Steven Price, aboard to manage her.

In the spring of that same year Captain Price sold the **GREATER NEW YORK** to the Menke brothers. A year later he sold **FRENCH'S NEW SENSATION** to the same people.

And now, a decade after he had built his ownership up to four showboats, Captain Price was down to one, the **COLUMBIA**, and that one was being operated by his son. It was not that the Captain was forced to sell for financial reasons. He had made a fortune in the showboat business. But

EVALUATING YOUR FESTIVAL PLAY

(Continued from page 5)

4. **BLOCKING.** Are important scenes obscured by furniture? Is a scene played too far back or too far to one side — destroying balance? Is too much of the action in one certain area? Are minor characters out of the way of the main action? Do they seem superfluous? Is use made of the technique of actor placement to make dramatic scenes and entrances effective? Do minor characters make their shifts during dramatic entrances of other characters?

5. **STAGE BUSINESS.** How convincingly do characters invent or employ stage business? Does it seem labored and rehearsed or spontaneous and natural? Are there evidences of research and ingenuity in the use of stage business?

6. **TIMING.** Are entrances, exits and movements timed to harmonize with speeches? Is an actor forced to walk several steps after giving a dramatic exit speech? Do actors start entrance speeches immediately on making their appearance? Do they walk directly to targets or do they sidle and circumvent to consume time? Do movements of head, body and hands synchronize with accompanying speeches?

7. **STAYING IN CHARACTER.** Do actors, particularly character actors and old people stay in character at all times — sitting, rising, walking, speaking, and do they hold to their character even during periods of inaction?

8. **CONTRAST.** An otherwise humdrum play can be made to sparkle if excellent contrast is developed between characters. The seeking of contrast in tempo, position, stance, voice and mood offers unlimited challenge to the imaginative director. Has he employed the blocking and stage business to take full advantage of opportunities for contrast? Is contrast employed in movement and costuming also?

he was seventy years of age, and he was tired. He wanted to retire.

Steven Price operated the **COLUMBIA** until 1928, in which year he died. Captain Price then sold the **COLUMBIA** to the Menke brothers, and the name of Price passed from the rivers forever. The Captain died in Newport, Kentucky, in 1931.

What manner of man was this Captain Price, whose name became such a legend on the rivers? Certainly, next to French, he was the outstanding pioneer in river theatricals. In all, he owned at least seven showboats, possibly more, and they carried his name up and down the rivers from 1886 to 1928, a period of 42 years. He was one of the few men who made a fortune in the business, and kept it.

But in personal appearance and temperament he was far from the typical showman. He was short, wizened, and bandy-legged, and he boasted a most preposterous set of mutton-chop whiskers. Nervous and excitable, he

scampered through life in a perpetual state of helpless frenzy. It is told of him that in times of emergency he would run about the boat clawing at his whiskers with one hand and scratching his leg with the other, all the while squeaking orders in a high-pitched voice. When real danger threatened the boat, the members of the company found it best to lock the Captain up if possible, for he only got in the way, and his excited directions, if followed, only added to the crisis.

Captain Price was always falling into the river. Sometimes this would result from sheer excitement or absent-mindedness. His mind intent on something else, he would run right off the side of the boat, not realizing that he had reached the edge until he found himself in the water. More often, however, his unscheduled bath was the result of trying to control the movement of the boat by twisting his own body. He would stand on the edge of the top deck calling directions to the pilot, and leaning over the side in the direction in which he wanted the boat to go. A slight bump or gust of wind would topple him over. Then his deckhands would have to fish him out, for he was not a swimmer.

Captain Price was known as the stingiest man on the river, and an inveterate scavenger. It was said that one could tell the day of the week by looking at his pockets. All through the week he would collect pieces of twine, bent and rusty nails, and other cast-off objects. By Saturday his pockets would be bulging. On Sunday morning he would empty his pockets, straighten the bent nails, put the rusty ones in a pan of kerosene, wind the twine into a ball, and start all over again.

Despite these stories and many others like them, Captain Price had many admirable traits of character. His eccentricity and emotional childishness did not prevent him from being a competent business man and showman. He knew a good investment when he saw one, and he was an excellent judge of character. He hired and kept some of the ablest helpers and performers on the river. No venture of his was ever marked by failure.

Even his so-called "stinginess" extended only to little things. It could better be called frugality, and it was bounded by a strict personal integrity. It is not on record that he ever beat a bill or dealt unfairly with an employee. To those who were dependent upon him he was the soul of generosity, and everybody who worked for him remembers him with love and respect.

History, being interested in facts and statistics, will record that Captain Price was the co-founder, with French, of the modern showboat; that he owned more boats, and owned them longer, than any other man. But those who knew him remember him as a character, a personality, a friend. They chuckle with amusement as they spin yarns about the eccentricities of the funny little man, but the chuckle mellow into a smile of nostalgia and affection as they invariably finish by saying, "He was the sweetest, kindest little man I ever knew."

(The sixth and concluding article of this series will appear in our April issue — EDITOR)

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Occupational Opportunities in the Children's Theatre

By VIRGINIA LEE COMER

Senior Consultant on Community Arts

Association of the Junior Leagues of America, Inc., New York City.

THE Children's Theatre at this moment presents a strange dilemma in occupational opportunities. There seem to be relatively few job openings, yet at the same time there is a decided lack of well qualified people available to fill them. Up until the end of the war it would have been foolhardy to advise numbers of young people to plan careers in Children's Theatre. Since that time, however, there has been an astounding change in the situation. The spread of Children's Theatre has been rapid and has touched every region of the nation: new Community Children's Theatres have been organized, there is a growing awareness of the importance of creative dramatics, several colleges and universities have added courses and production work in Children's Theatre, and even the professional side of theatre for children has gained strength. It is safe to say that the idea of Children's Theatre is now accepted and recognized as an integral part of the educational theatre and the child's recreational activities. The full development of the field remains to be accomplished with the saturation point far in the future. Therefore, it would not be amiss for high school students to look toward fruitful future participation in this expanding children's theatre activity, provided their interest is sincere and they are willing to take the necessary training.

When a young person is convinced of his interest in Children's Theatre a fundamental question is whether he wishes to work with children or direct his energies toward theatre for children. The two are inter-related, of course, but a student's inclinations, abilities and temperament will probably point more strongly in one direction than the other. If a deci-

sion can be reached, it will simplify the choice of institution for training and direct the emphasis of his higher education. Work with children means the use of drama as a part of the total educational and recreational activity of the child. Professional training will focus on the psychological and social development of the individual child as he functions in group activity. Theatre for children means the adaptation of formal theatre to the requirements of a special audience. Hence, a thorough foundation in all phases of theatre practice is essential to the use of theatre in the development of the child through his experience as an audience member.

Now what jobs are there?

Directors with proper qualifications are the keystones of Children's Theatre. The lack of them is one of the greatest problems facing Children's Theatre today. It is difficult to find a good director of adults, and those with children's theatre experience are even more scarce. When directors lacking children's theatre background are used it means a considerable period of trial and error while the director builds up some knowledge of the requirements and responses of the child audience. When child casts are used, the director must be able not only to turn out a performance satisfying to the audience but also to handle the child actors without exploitation, giving them a rather constructive experience. People with these qualifications are truly rare and this is one of several reasons there are now so many theatres using adult rather than child casts.

Full time directing jobs in Children's Theatre are few at present. They appear mainly through City Recreation Departments and college speech or drama departments. The number of these jobs is increasing steadily as chil-

dren's theatre work is developed in both agencies. Salaries parallel prevailing scales for other recreation specialists and faculty members. Full time directors for independent community children's theatres are not possible now and perhaps never will be because of the limiting but desirable practice of keeping admission prices low.

There is wide-spread demand for part-time directors who are employed on a per play basis, pay depending on length of play and locality, ranging at present from fifty dollars to two hundred and fifty or more. Part-time directors are drawn from high school or college faculties, Little Theatre staffs, women who have left full time professional work, and, in the New York area, from Broadway aspirants or practitioners during their "at liberty" periods.

Those students who now expect to devote full time adult theatre might very well consider the professional and economic advantages of having some training and experience in Children's Theatre. Someday, some place, they may very well be faced with the necessity of directing in Children's Theatre.

The situation with *Designer-Technicians* is similar to that of directors, though in all fairness it should be stated that full-time and part-time services are less in demand now. This may not always be so. For the designer-technician who has directing ambitions as well, Children's Theatre offers opportunity. Although teaching or working on a Little Theatre staff may be the regular job, he may also direct plays for children, if he has had some training and experience in directing.

Drama specialist jobs for Recreation Workers are to be found in both public recreation programs and in privately supported settlements and community centers. Full time positions in Public Recreation Departments are increasing. Usually the drama specialist must be equipped to work with adult and teen-age groups as well as with children. For children's work there must be a thorough grounding in the techniques of story-playing, creative dramatics and informal production. These same qualifications hold for community center workers. It is impossible to give any accurate statement on remuneration, since both public

and private funds for recreation vary radically among communities.

Many summer playground and park jobs are open to teachers, students and others with drama skills. The valuable experience gained in this work compensates for the usually low pay.

Drama jobs in day camps and settlement camps pay around thirty-five to forty dollars a week. In private camps the scale is usually higher.

Children's Theatre touches *Teachers* at several levels. In elementary schools creative dramatics can be used in classroom work to excellent advantage. Also, play projects with grades or the whole school benefits greatly from the teacher who is especially prepared to handle them. Possibly, some day there will be drama supervisors in public school systems as there now are music and art supervisors, though there is no indication of this.

Teachers in junior and senior high schools, universities, colleges and teachertraining institutions can use student productions for the young children of the community with profit to students and audience.

These same teachers may also direct plays for established community groups, help to develop new Children's Theatres, or conduct workshops for children in addition to their regular teaching positions. Community directing and technical jobs provide a supplementary income often welcome to teachers.

As institutions of higher learning add courses in Children's Theatre to the curriculum, more instructors with children's theatre background will be sought.

Private Studios are the answer for those who want to be their own bosses and engage in free enterprise. There is ample room and need for schools and workshops for children, provided the director has sound training and a humanitarian view-point, meaning stamina to reject Hollywood-struck parents and to refuse the easy way of exploitation. A person of integrity and inspiration can develop a sound business based on the creative needs of children, since this appeals to thoughtful parents, and in the long run builds on the respect of the community. The income of studio directors is derived from tuitions and admissions to performances.

What are the prospects of the *Playwright* for Children's Theatre? Creative

writing is always a precarious occupation and income from writing plays for children does not now, and probably never will, support an individual since royalties are comparatively low and should be kept so in view of the whole economy of Children's Theatre. However, as supplementary work, playwriting is not only satisfying but remunerative, providing the person has talent, skill and the self-discipline to keep on writing. Standards demanded of plays are rising steadily so that it is a sheer waste of time to write without a thorough knowledge of playwriting technique plus an understanding of the special requirements, leeways and limitations demanded by the child audience. This can only be gained by close observation or work with a Children's Theatre in some capacity. Writing plays for children has certain advantages over the adult field: there are decent and adequate outlets for distribution of both published and non-published work, good plays for children do not date and in one theatre the same play may be done two or three times in the span of a few years for new generations of theatre-goers.

Actors in Children's Theatre are volunteers with the exception of those employed by the three or four reputable professional companies. These companies pay Equity minimums or above. Trouping schedules are rigorous, but the experience gained from the road is comparable to no other. Training must be as comprehensive for acting to children as to adults, with more emphasis on singing and dancing. Playing to child audiences is the finest of teaching devices for students or seasoned professionals because of the demands for sincerity, clarity of interpretation and clean-cut technique.

From the foregoing brief enumeration of job opportunities, it will be seen that the enterprising person who wants to devote full or part time to Children's Theatre need not be confined to the large theatrical centers or a few academic institutions or even to those communities which have established theatres. The home town may very well be the first place to explore possibilities through recreational and educational agencies.

It is obvious that special training is required for all children's theatre work,

but what of the broad cultural background necessary for the worker to function fully and effectively?

There is nothing sadder than to see a person, supposedly well trained in all the techniques of theatre arts, whose vision and even personality are bounded by the walls of the stage house. Techniques may blind one to the essence of theatre. Therefore, the student should carefully plan his education in a manner that will develop his professional and personal resources to the fullest.

The theatre is a reflection and interpretation of life. It demands of its workers knowledge of human beings, how and why they feel, think, act and react as they do. This understanding is essential to directors, actors and designers in interpreting characters and their relationships. Also, since the theatre is a co-operative art, the psychology of working with and in groups is just as essential to those in formal Children's Theatre as to those specializing in work with children, a major part of whose training will be in psychology. Finally, the individual child in the audience and the audience as a whole cannot be understood or served properly without psychological perception on the part of those responsible for the program. Lack of perception, in fact, may subject children to destructive experiences. Drama deals with ideas gleaned from the whole range of thought. A knowledge of philosophies evolved by man gives the basis for anything more than the superficial interpretation of drama. Many of the best plays for children deal with deeply fundamental concepts which are lost to the child without clear illumination when translated to the stage. Further, the rich interpretation of drama requires its relation to history and literature. Much of the material used in Children's Theatre is rooted in folk-lore, knowledge of which is essential. Since theatre synthesizes the other arts, familiarity with music, painting, sculpture, architecture and the dance is necessary. A study of aesthetics clarifies this synthesis. To become a well-rounded theatre worker and to bring to a job all that it needs, the student, then, should have at least survey courses in literature, history and philosophy, more or less extensive work in psychology and the arts allied to the theatre.

Success in Children's Theatre work presupposes mastery of theatre techniques, but the student will find that success or failure in this work many times is factored by the depth and breadth of his cultural background.



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THEATRE ON BROADWAY

By PAUL MYERS

Theatre Collection, New York Public Library
New York 18, N. Y.

Readers of this magazine may order tickets for Broadway plays through Mr. Myers. Request should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

IF one were compelled to describe the current Broadway scene in one word, it would have to be — dismal. Half of the new productions which have opened during the past month have already closed and only one is going along with real momentum. The others are hoping to pick up larger audiences and are pushing on in that hope. One, *Mr. Meadowbrook*, by Ronald Telfer, has openly proclaimed that it is playing at a loss only long enough to insure the producer's getting his share of the money expected from the possible sale of the screen rights. Into such straits, I fear, has theatrical production been plunged.

Kiss Me, Kate

The new smash hit is *Kiss Me, Kate*, the musical comedy remotely founded upon Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. With a book by Bella and Samuel Spewack and music and lyrics by Cole Porter, the production is definitely not a lyrical setting of the familiar Elizabethan farce. A familiarity of the play does add to the enjoyment of *Kiss Me, Kate*, but a familiarity with the contemporary theatre is even more essential.

The locale of KISS ME, KATE is Ford's Theatre in Baltimore; the occasion, the premiere of a production of the TAMING OF THE SHREW. Fred Graham and Lilli Vanessi, one of the American theatre's favorite stage teams, are starring in the production. Some eager playgoers have seen in the book an attempt to capture the personalities of Lynn Fontaine and Alfred Lunt, but Lilli and Fred are composites of all of the strengths and weaknesses of many acting teams. They are stock in the fullest sense.

One does not, however, look for depths of character portrayal in this type of theatre piece. Binding together

the spats of the starring team and the trials of the premiere is one of the best scores to have been hard in these parts in many a day. Cole Porter has been composing his musicals since *Kitcky-Koo* in 1919. His "Night and Day" and "Begin the Beguine" are only two of the dozens of songs which he has contributed to our popular musical library of all-time favorites. The newest score is his most brilliant. In it he has created tunes of several distinct types — each first-class in its own sphere. There is the love song, "So In Love"; the torch song, "Always True To You (In My Fashion)"; the gusty, "Where Is the Life That Late I Led?"; the vaudeville sketch-like, "Brush Up Your Shakespeare." One would be hard put to it to name a favorite.

The credit for the success of KISS ME, KATE must be distributed, too, among all of the following: Patricia Morison, Alfred Drake, Lisa Kirk of the acting cast; Harold Lang and Bill Calhoun of the dancing cast; Hanya Holm who directed and designed the choreography; Lemuel Ayers who designed the production (and co-produced it with Saint Subber) and John C. Wilson who did the staging. The critical acclaim and the constant line of purchasers before the ticket-window at the Century Theatre attest to the success of all of these individuals.

The Victors

Several blocks south of the theatre district, on Bleacher Street, New Stages is once again proving the merit of such a theatre organization. This is the co-operative effort of a large group of theatre people, which premiered about a year ago with Barrie Starvis' play about Galileo, *Lamp at Midnight*. This was followed by two adaptations from the French of Jean-Paul Sartre by Eva Wolas: *To Tell You the Truth* and

The Respectful Prostitute. The latter play, a trenchant study of racial tensions, won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for the best play of foreign adaptation to be presented in New York during the 1947-48 season. It was presented with various curtain-raisers — Lennox Robinson's *Church Street*, Richard Harriott's *Hope Is the Thing with Feathers* and Thornton Wilder's *A Happy Journey*. Mr. Wilder and M. Sartre have figured again in their newest bill: *The Victors*, adapted from the French, *Les Morts Sans Sépultures*.

Once again New Stages has offered a completely creditable production. It is a grim, but very impressive play. All of the action is set in a schoolhouse in a village in Southern France shortly before the invasion of the allied armies. A band of resistance fighters have been imprisoned and their captors are endeavoring to wring from them by torture the secrets of their movement. At times, the play is almost too much to bear. The ancient Greeks would have relegated such action to a tableau on an inner stage, but in THE VICTORS everything takes place most realistically before the audience.

Much has been said and written of late of the Existentialist philosophy and of M. Sartre's place in its rise and propagation. This play, I believe, illustrates more clearly the dominant points of that philosophy than the other works of M. Sartre already shown here. No doubt the advantage of having as outstanding a dramatist as Mr. Wilder make the adaptation, had more than a little to do with the added effect achieved in the production.

Mary Hunter directed an excellent cast which included Florida Friebus, Alexander Scourby, Leon Janney and Boris Tumarin. The last named is directing New Stages' next offering, an adaptation by Richard L. O'Connell and James Graham-Lujan of Federico Garcia-Lorca's BLOOD WEDDING. I hope, to include a review of that production in next month's article.

The Shop at Sly Corner

Boris Karloff has made a second unsuccessful return from Hollywood in another English importation. Last season, under the auspices of Maurice



Patricia Morison and Alfred Drake (center) in the finale of the smash musical success, *Kiss Me Kate*. Designed by Lemuel Ayers.

Evans, Mr. Karloff appeared locally in J. B. Priestley's, *The Linden Tree*. The play, at that time, was still enjoying a successful London run. Most of the New York critics hit the drama pretty hard and the production was closed in less than a week. Similarly, *The Shop at Sly Corner* (Mr. Karloff's latest venture), has been very popular in London. It ran here for seven performances.

It is difficult to comprehend how Edward Percy's bit of claptrap could succeed. It is unadulterated hokum—even for murder melodrama. If a man had been stationed in the orchestra pit to roll out a drum call as each clue is planted; the act could not have been more obvious. The daughter's "young man" returns from the South Pacific with a blow-gun and a supply of bated poison darts, a suite of armor is conveniently placed for the black-mailer to hide in and overhear, the sliding panel behind which is concealed the oven in which the stolen gold is melted and re-formed. If Margaret Perry had directed the production in an attempt to satirize just this type of play—somewhat in the style of the unforgettable *ARSENIC AND OLD LACE*—her efforts might have met with success. As it was; it was just too much for anyone to take seriously.

The Smile of the World

Garson Kanin's, whose *Born Yesterday* continues to delight local audiences, did not enjoy similar success with his most recent offering. Mrs. Kanin, the actress-playwright Ruth Gordon, was represented very briefly earlier in the season by *The Leading Lady*, in which she played the title role. This evidently is not the Kanins' season; though Garson's sister-in-law, Fay, is the author of the successful *Goodbye, My Fancy*. The recent play, *The Smile of the World*, lasted for only five performances mid-January at the Lyceum Theatre.

In spite of its lack of success, the play was an interesting one. The theme is a difficult one to present with clarity upon the stage. Perhaps, Mr. Kanin will find an opportunity to elaborate upon it in novel form. It almost requires the leisure which a novel affords. The author has taken for his text a quote from John Morley, the English statesman and man of letters: "And what is this smile of the world, to win which we are bidden to sacrifice our moral manhood; this frown of the world, whose terrors are more awful than the withering up of truth, and the slow going out of light within the souls of us?"

The principal figure of the play is United States Supreme Court Justice Reuben Boulting. He has served on the bench for a considerable period. He has changed from a young liberal to an aging die-hard. It is a process that many go through and it is still largely inexplicable. Mrs. Boulting has sensed this transformation in her husband and she sees in his young clerk, Sam Fenn, many of the attributes she admired in her husband. Too much of the play is devoted to a romantic theme in the relationships between these three individuals. It would have been more interesting to see the main theme pursued and more fully illustrated.

Otto Kruger and Ruth Gordon played the Boultings, Warren Stevens enacted young

Fenn. Laura Pierpont was wonderful as Judge Boulting's oft-married mother. Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis and Boris Marshalov filled lesser roles. The production was directed by the author. It would be interesting to see Mr. Kanin return to this theme someday soon. His is the kind of outlook which could bring much to such a discussion.

As the Girls Go

Bobby Clark is one of this critic's favorite comics. His current offering is very Clark-ful and, therefore, just right for me. It affords him a chance for all of his famous tricks, his changes of costumes, his wry—sometimes rather sad—buffoonery. In *As the Girls Go*, he plays Waldo Wellington, the nation's firstman. His wife, Lucille Thompson Wellington (played by Irene Rich), is the first woman to be elected President of the United States.

There are few surprises for the veteran Bobby Clark fan in the latest production. There is the opportunity, however, to see this comedian once again flawlessly execute his old routines. The book of William Roos is custom-tailored to Clark's dimensions. Jimmy McHugh's score and Harold Adamson's lyrics are adequate. Hermes Pan's dances are quite stock. It is flashy and gaudy, but it has one of our stage's most able buffoons. The old audiences will welcome it for that; new audiences will queue up for their initiation.

Macbeth

I journeyed out into the suburbs last week to catch the Maragret Webster Shakespeare Company in their production of *Macbeth*. It is not often that I have the chance to share a production with large numbers of you. Under the auspices of S. Hurok, however, this company will play in many of your communities before the end of the current season. A great many of you have, no doubt, already witnessed either the *Macbeth* or the same cast's setting of *Hamlet*. They have been on tour since quite early last fall and already covered quite a section of the United States and Canada.

Through her productions of the '30s with Maurice Evans, Margaret Webster acquired a justly deserved reputation as a director of Shakespeare's plays. Her *RICHARD II*, *KING HENRY IV, PART I*, the full-length *HAMLET* and *TWELFTH NIGHT* were as good as the theatre can offer. A bit later, her *OTHELLO* with Paul Robeson and *MACBETH* with Mr. Evans and Judith Anderson further enhanced her reputation. Her volume, *SHAKESPEARE WITHOUT TEARS*, and her nation-wide lecture tours have built up a tremendous audience for any production to which her name might be attached.

Sitting before the slip-shod *Macbeth* in the auditorium of a Mt. Vernon (New York) high school, one wondered to what extent Miss Webster had been involved. Surely, she could not be happy to have this outfit running about the country under her name? I spent one season (to be autobiographical for just a moment) touring a section of the United States in just such a company.

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We were under-rehearsed, under-paid and over-tired. "Killing a love of Shakespeare in the school children of America", we used to sarcastically call our activity. Miss Webster has been able to engage a professional company, rehearse them for a suitable period and—supposedly—mount a sound production.

Joseph Holland blustered his way through the title role. Carol Goodner seemed a most ineffectual Lady Macbeth. Alfred Ryder, the company's other top-liner, appeared as Malcolm—creditable enough. It is Mr. Ryder who plays the Hamlet. Miss Goodner and Mr. Holland playing Queen Gertrude and King Claudius in that tragedy. David Lewis and Arthur O'Connell did all they could in the roles of Macduff and Banquo. I hope that before the tour progresses very much more Miss Webster will take the company in hand and endeavor to wring from them a more distinguished production. It is heart-breaking to see so fine a reputation—and so great a plan as this touring company—go so far wrong.

The Future?

The future of the local theatre is somewhat bleak. A threatened strike of scene-builders would tie up all new production. A few offerings are completely built and will, therefore, in all probability come into town. New plays are looked for from Arthur Miller and Clifford Odets. The delightful *Carousel* is returning for a limited engagement at the New York City Center. One hopes that each new offering will be the one to turn the tide but disappointment dogs the heels of failure.

THE PLAY OF THE MONTH

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Director of Dramatics, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky

This department is designed to assist directors, teachers, and students choose, cast and produce plays of recognized merit. Suggestions concerning plays which readers should like to see discussed here will be welcomed by the Department Editor.

Staging THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE

By EDWIN L. LEVY

Assistant Professor of Theatre, University of Denver, Denver, Colo.

THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE, by William Saroyan. A humorous play in two acts. Seven men, two women; one setting. Published by Samuel French. Royalty, \$35.00.

Suitability

Staging William Saroyan's *The Beautiful People* can be an extremely rewarding experience for a director. At the University of Denver this play was chosen to open the 1948 Summer Drama Series of Great Plays because of its disarming innocence of theme and beguiling characters. For just the same reason, it can be selected to add variety to a university, college, or advanced high school drama program.

In addition to the unusually appealing theme of the play, *THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE* has the added blessings of a small cast—seven men and two women—and one setting. Nothing in the original play had to be edited for our production, and it is believed that directors will find the published playscript of tremendous value. Mr. Saroyan staged his own work for the original production at the Lyceum Theatre in New York, where the play opened April 21, 1941, and ran 120 performances. Fortunately, his stage directions have been retained in the script, and they are exceptionally complete, vivid, and well-motivated.

The play is short on plot but long on interesting characterizations; it is lacking in action but abounding in the opportunity of creating warmly appealing moods. Briefly, it may be considered highly acceptable as that "different" sort of play directors are constantly seeking.

Edwin Levy

Edwin Levy is one of the directors of dramatic productions at the University of Denver for the past three years. He received his M. A. degree from Louisiana State University, where he staged and appeared in several major productions. During the war, his productions of *THE MILKY WAY* and *ABOUT FACE!* toured a number of Eastern army camps. He also directed the Circle Players, a group of drama students who later formed the first stock company on the Gulf Coast.

Plot

The plot of *The Beautiful People* is negligible. For those who have to know "what the play is about" it concerns primarily the Webster family—Owen, the fifteen-year old son who writes novels consisting of one word; Agnes, his sister who pretends to be taken in by the boy's pretense that the mice in their house spell out her name in flowers when she is ill or has a birthday; and the father, Jonah, who talks to people on street corners and lives by cashing in the pension checks of a complete stranger, dead for seven years. The other people are Harmony Blueblossom, a "little old lady in the summertime", who loved Jonah thirty years before; Mr. William Prim, vice-president of the company which has been sending the pension checks; Dan Hillboy, the "good companion" of Jonah; Father Hogan, a benign priest; Harold,

the son who went away from home and returns for a beautiful final moment; and Steve, whom Harold befriends.

I find that it is impossible to outline the "plot" of *THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE* without it sounding naive and fantastic. Rather, I should suggest that interested directors read the play (and then re-read it several times) and then decide upon its value. It is definitely a play that will "grow" on most readers. But it is not the type to be handled by extreme realists—it requires a blending of imagination, humor, wit, wisdom, and beauty—but imagination first of all.

Casting

The roles are not easy to cast. Owen should look and act like a fifteen-year-old, but he should be able to project casually the precocity of the character without its becoming obnoxious. Harmony Blueblossom, who serves as foil to Owen in the charming but difficult scene, must be small, quiet, keenly amazed at the boy's unending imagination, and convincingly about fifty years old. Jonah Webster should be rather tall and large; the poetic lines allotted to him take on an enchanting credibility when uttered by so imposing a figure. William Prim is small, thin, bewildered, and thoroughly sympathetic. He should be completely dignified, especially in his early scenes, so that the whistle-blowing episode comes as a delightful surprise. Agnes needs an ethereal quality—soft-featured and soft-voiced—and she must convincingly project being wonderfully in love for the first time. Dan Hillboy is larger than Prim but not so large as Jonah. This is an excellent character role. His mellow regret of the "lost years" is one of the best moments in the play. Father Hogan needs to be a dominant figure; although his time on stage is relatively brief, his reassuring the sudden fears of both Jonah and Dan has to be thoroughly believable.

A problem arises in the casting of Harold Webster. He appears only at the very end of the play, but it is necessary that he be



The final scene from *The Beautiful People* as staged by Edwin Levy at the University of Denver. Setting designed by Corwin Rife.

able to play the cornet or the trumpet. The final scene calls for Harold, surrounded by the others, to play the melody "Wonderful One", which previously has been heard off-stage throughout the play. He has only three brief speeches, and it is advised that if an actor-cornetist is not available, a capable musician with adequate speaking ability be selected. Steve, who accompanies Harold back home, has no speeches.

Directing

Twenty-three rehearsals (excluding three dress rehearsals which were attended by trial audiences) were necessary. Sixteen days were devoted to blocking and polishing individual scenes and seven days were spent on unifying the production and regulating tempo.

Two major directing problems occurred. The first scene of Act One is approximately twenty-three minutes, and calls for only two characters — Owen and Harmony. Obviously, important exposition is handled in this scene, but only one of the characters (Owen) can plausibly be given a great deal of activity, since Harmony is a much older person. The danger of this scene's becoming static or tiresome may be overcome by having Owen's movements varied and well-motivated—giving him business that seems completely right for a fifteen-year-old: climbing over the furniture, sitting on the floor, jumping on the window seat, running wherever possible, and the like, while relating the wonders of his amazing family.

The second problem arises in Act Two, Scene Two, during the several long speeches of Jonah. Again, an overly static situation may result unless Jonah is given motivated action. He cannot roam aimlessly or it may detract from the content of his lines. Therefore, we had Jonah begin the speeches seated at the table with Dan and Father Hogan. Later, as he became more reminiscent and even vehement, he rose and moved slowly about the room, especially in the areas before the fireplace and near the porch entrance. A further difficulty in this scene (which, incidentally, has been criticized by some because it bothers to "explain away" the unusual activities of these amazing characters who have been gradually accepted in the first half of the play) is that both Jonah and Dan become increasingly intoxicated (but not offensively so) yet their dialogue has to be clearly understood.

Technical Problems

The setting for this play offers many opportunities for an imaginative designer. The floor plan suggested in the play-script was generally followed, with the exception that the exterior strip (suggested downstage of the living-room) was not used, and the living-room was brought completely downstage. The setting should be highly suggestive—this can be achieved effectively by using only framework for the upstage wall (the porch and entrance to the house), so that elements in the exterior—the hill, trees, telephone poles, etc.—may be seen in the distance. The interior should be definitely "lived in", yet not to such a bizarre degree as in *You Can't Take It With You*. The

room can be comfortably cluttered with books, pictures, magazines, framed mottoes, etc. Mr. Corwin Rife, from the Dock Street Theatre, designed and supervised the execution of the effective setting used in the Denver University production.

The lighting is not difficult. In the night scene (Act II, Scene 2), both interior and exterior should be dimly lit, with a gradual increase in intensity after Dan Hillboy's story. Again script suggestions proved very valuable.

Properties are equally simple. The flowers which spell "Agnes" can be mounted on a sheet of cardboard (painted the same color as the ground cloth) and tacked to the floor between scenes. Obviously, the mice do not appear!

The actors each require one costume throughout, which simplifies matters further. Owen may wear a T-shirt (or sweat shirt) and dungarees; Agner, a simple house dress (Saroyan describes her clothes as "haphazard"); Harmony wears a simple suit and hat (we used a lavender color with white blouse and fluffy collar); Jonah and Dan wear old but neat, dark clothes: gray trousers, dark vests, armbands are suggested. Father Hogan wears the garb of a priest; Mr. Prim is very neatly dressed in dark business suit; and Harold and Steve, having hitch-hiked across the country, would wear comfortable slacks and either coat or sweater.

In make-up, it is important that Harmony, Jonah, Dan, and Father Hogan be effectively aged, including grey hair and facial shadows. Prim needs severity of line in his facial make-up; the others are juvenile with no special problems.

Budget

The following is an approximate cost of the production discussed in this article:

Royalty (for three performances)	\$60.00
Carpentry	80.00
Paint	10.00
Scripts	8.50
Publicity, tickets, programs	45.00
Costumes	12.00
Properties	11.50
	\$227.00

Music

Obviously, music can be of great assistance in enhancing mood. In addition to Harold's off-stage playing of *Wonderful One*, recordings were used of Wagner's *Traume* between Scenes One and Two of Act One, and the *Mirror Variations* from the *Faust*

HOW THEY WERE STAGED (Supplement No. 2), edited by Earl W. Blank, contains complete information on the staging of the following full-length plays, with the discussion based upon actual productions: *STARDUST*, *MISS LULU BETT*, *CUCKOOS ON THE HEARTH*, *THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF*, *THE BLUE BIRD*, *JANUARY THAW*, and *DEAR RUTH*. Price \$0.60

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Ballet Music between Scenes One and Two of Act Two. The script suggested Reynaldo Hahn's *L'Heure Exquise* to be played on the piano by Jonah. We substituted Schumann's *Traumerei*, first played by Jonah and later "sneaked in" as recorded background music in the Jonah-Agnes scene at the end of Act One.

I should like to repeat the suggestion that a director select *The Beautiful People* only after careful consideration. It would not be a good choice for audiences accustomed to only melodramas and farces. It has an unusual, elusive delicacy which may not appeal to some otherwise very fine theatre craftsmen, and this delicacy must be sensitively approached. Likewise, the actors have to be at home—almost "in love"—with their parts and with the play to do it full justice. The theme of *The Beautiful People*, which is simply an unswerving faith in man's goodness, and that love is the only thing that matters, has to be presented through Saroyan's unusual characters becoming sharply alive. They are really very simple people who are allowed moments of sentimentality. It seems to me that concentrating on such a theme for four or five weeks can prove an invigorating relief from some of our more scintillating comedies and greater problem plays.

April issue: NIGHT MUST FALL

The Radio Program of the Month

By S. I. SCHARER, Radio Department

New York University, Washington Square, N. Y.

The purpose of this department is to direct attention to the outstanding radio programs on the air during the 1948-49 school year. Comments and suggestion from readers are welcomed by the Department Editor.

LUX RADIO THEATRE

(Columbia Broadcasting System, Monday evening 9:00-10:00 P. M. EST)

FOR sixteen years, now, Lux has been presenting an hour-long drama once a week. Not every season has produced consistently well acted and directed drama. From what has been presented this season, however, it is safe to conclude that many pleasant hours will be spent listening to the "Lux Radio Theatre."

The reader is probably aware that Lux presents radio versions of Hollywood movies. Often the stars of the movie are obtained to recreate the same roles on the air. As a result most of the performances are much more polished than they would be ordinarily. The actors having created the roles for the screen, are able to recreate them with a minimum of rehearsal time.

Although there is no scenery other than the plain backdrop and velvet curtains, spectators visiting the "Lux Radio Theatre" for the first time are often surprised to see the lighting effects change with the progress of the script just as though they were watching a stage play.

This is not done for the audience, but for the benefit of the actors. Ten years ago, C. B. DeMille, original producer of the show, tried it out with the idea that it might help the actors capture the illusion of the radio play. The innovation proved so successful that it has been kept as a regular procedure and a "lighting script" is now an important feature of every Monday evening's performance.

The most important limiting factor in a radio program of the nature of "Lux Radio Theatre" is its source of material. Only a small percentage of motion pictures turned out every year make any contribution to the art. It is readily apparent that a radio program

which has presented over five hundred scripts thus far cannot possibly have used only the best motion pictures for its adaptations.

Another limiting factor is the practice of using Hollywood stars in the roles they originally portrayed on the screen. As mentioned above, for the most part this has a salutary effect on the show as a whole. About one out of ten shows, however, suffer terribly because of this practice. Some actors who give satisfying performances on the screen just do not have the ability to act successfully in a medium where the voice is the only means of expression. As a result some performances are amateurish, despite the name stars who appear on them.

By and large, however, only meritorious motion pictures are chosen for adaptation. In many cases scripts gain from the fact that they are condensed into an hour while in their original state they were cluttered up with unnecessary scenes which added little but time to the movie versions.

The first program in this series was presented on October 14, 1934 when *Seventh Heaven* was offered with Miriam Hopkins and John Boles in the starring roles.

The roster of motion pictures which have been adapted for the "Lux Radio Theatre" and the stars who have appeared on the program includes practically every well-known movie and performer. Through the years "Radio Theatre" has produced such classics as *Berkeley Square* with Leslie Howard; *Smilin' Through* with Jane Cowl; *Counselor-at-law* with Paul Muni; *The Old Soak* with Wallace Beery; *The Virginian* with Gary Cooper; *The Life of Louis Pasteur* with Paul Muni; *Cavalcade* with Herbert Marshall and Madeleine

Carroll; and *Dodsworth* with Walter Huston and Fay Bainter.

Of more recent vintage are *Blossoms in the Dust* with Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon; *Suspicion* with Joan Fontaine and Brian Aherne; *In Which We Serve* with Ronald Coleman; *My Sister Eileen* with Rosalind Russell, Brian Aherne and Janet Blair; *Naughty Marietta* with Nelson Eddy and Jeanette McDonald; and *Casablanca* starring Hedy Lamarr, Alan Ladd and John Loder.

The great variety of the above is typical of the series. It seems to this writer, however, that "Radio Theatre" would make a considerable contribution in the field if the producers made it a practice to present adaptations of foreign films as well as those produced by Hollywood. This would enable millions of listeners who have no other opportunity, to become acquainted with the better foreign films. Certainly any foreign films which have placed in the first ten of the Motion Picture Critics Awards are worthy of such treatment.

In its sixteen years on the air "Radio Theatre" has had virtually every top ranking star of the screen on one or more of its programs. And during that time, many of them have shown that despite their familiarity with both movie and radio techniques, the still suffer from mike fright.

Don Ameche, for instance, always drinks a pint of milk before going on the air. "to soothe my jangled nerves." Milk also serves as a sedative for William Powell.

Barbara Stanwyck finds a certain satisfaction during rehearsals in slipping her heels in and out of her shoes. Whether for moral or physical support, or both, Claudette Colbert wraps her legs around a stool or chair. Ray Milland plays a couple hands of gin rummy before going on the air. Bette Davis and Gary Cooper find relief in chain smoking. And Mickey Rooney, always in high gear before air time, bounces into the studio with ebullience and enthusiasm, and leads the orchestra in impromptu jam sessions.

Not all the guests are jumpy. Among the calm ones are Ronald Coleman, Lionel Barrymore, Donald Crisp, Paul Muni and Gary Grant. Grant acts out all his dialogue for his radio performances as if he were before a Hollywood camera; and when he is out of a scene he walks into the wings, mingles with the supporting players and contributes to the off-stage sound effects such as applause, chatter and shouts.

At one performance, a little man wearing an officious expression appeared at the stage door of Hollywood's Vine Street Playhouse, home of the "Radio Theatre."

"I'm here to check fire equipment for the insurance company," he said, flashing a badge.

The doorman nodded respectfully and the little man entered. He had timed his visit perfectly. The curtain was just going up on the "Radio Theatre."

The little man stood in the wing throughout the hour program, watching the stars perform. He applauded, laughed, and even shed a few tears—emoting on cue with just the proper reaction the dialogue called for.

As the curtain rang down, the little man strolled past the doorman and out into the street. The fire equipment was left unchecked.



(Left to right): Glenn Ford and Evelyn Keyes in the CBS "Lux Radio Theatre" dramatization of *The Mating of Millie*. Marguerite Chapman, Dick Powell and Janis Carter sharing a snack during rehearsal for a Lux Radio Theatre show. Greer Garson during a Lux Radio Theatre program.

RESOLUTIONS

The following resolutions were read at a conference of Thespian Troupes held on April 28, 1948, at the William Penn Senior High School, York, Pa., under the chairmanship of Leon C. Miller, Thespian Regional Director for Pennsylvania; and recommended as a guide for the sponsors of all Pennsylvania troupes:

1. That any dramatics program to be successful, should have at least three major plays and a number of one-act plays a season; and that the dramatics program of each school should be constantly publicized in the school and the community.

2. That dramatics is a major activity of any school, second to none; that it should therefore be recognized as a department, not as a part of an English Department or a Speech Department; and that the director of dramatics should have the same rating as the heads of other school departments.

3. That the director of dramatics, in order to carry on an intensive program, must be given school time to do this work by being partly or entirely relieved of teaching classes in any other subject, and that additional compensation be paid over and above his basic salary for the overtime

hours spent in preparing major plays for public presentation.

4. That the greater part of funds earned by the Department of Dramatics be earmarked for use in furthering the dramatics program of the school.

5. That high schools affiliated with The National Thespian Society stress the importance and value of membership in the national organization.

6. That Thespian troupes set aside a certain number of complimentary tickets for each of their major plays, and invite students from other nearby Thespian troupes to be their guests at these productions.

7. That all Thespian troupes start planning early to send delegates to the Third National Dramatic Arts Conference to be held at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, June 13 through 18, 1949.

The doorman scratched his head and admitted that he had been duped by a gate crasher.

Many try it, but few succeed at the Vine Street Playhouse, which seats about 2,000. Dormen and ushers have been put through the mill and now recognize almost every trick in the books, and some that aren't.

The queues that form outside the Playhouse and extend well down Vine Street would make great source material for a psychologist on a field trip. They represent all types of radio fans; but their common denominator is their willingness to try any ruse to gain admittance to the theatre.

Often those not endowed with the valuable pasteboard that is the open sesame to audience shows, came laden with musical instruments — everything from piccolos to bass tubas. They try to walk in the stage door posing as members of the orchestra.

But this is an old gag to the doorman, who politely turns them away, tuba and all.

Two lines of fans stretch down the Vine Street sidewalk like a restless serpent. One line is composed of the blessed, the smug, the confident — ticket holders. The other consists

of the hopeful, the watchful, the impatient — those without tickets, hoping some ticket-holders will be delayed over dinner or snarled in traffic.

The queues have grown to such proportions that they have become a favorite prey for vendors, who do a healthy business hawking hot dogs, candy and ice cream to the waiting fans.

One type of fan ushers meet frequently is the "bluffer." This type usually flashes an important-looking business card, proclaiming to be a high executive of an influential firm. When he finds himself stymied by the impassive expression of an unimpressed usher, he usually stalks away muttering threats that "the president of the company will hear about this."

Many fans try to get inside by slipping the usher an old ticket. At a broadcast of *The Jolson Story*, ushers spotted several tickets dated 1943. So now the color of the tickets is changed each week and the dates are checked carefully.

A favorite trick of bobby-soxers is to send one of their clan, bearing a legitimate ticket, into the theatre. Once inside, she climbs to the balcony and opens the fire-exit doors to admit her pals.

Although such shenanigans are officially discouraged, the public's clamor for admission is viewed, naturally, as a compliment to the show.

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By H. KENN CARMICHAEL

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This department is designed to direct attention to the outstanding motion pictures of the 1948-49 season. Suggestions for future discussions are welcomed by the Department Editor.

NEW ADVENTURES OF DON JUAN

Recent Releases

Numbered among the recent releases calculated to offer box-office competition in the Academy Awards are several films that are winning wide support from the public. Chief among those not reported in these columns are three already familiar titles: *Command Decision* (MGM), *The Snake Pit* (20th Century-Fox), and *Boy with the Green Hair* (RKO). Confidence in *Command Decision* has prompted several reviewers to elect it the best American picture of 1948; *The Snake Pit* is generally conceded to be an accurately and powerfully etched story of mental illness; and *Boy with the Green Hair*, while stirring up considerable controversy, has been awarded generous praise in many quarters.

Currently commanding equal attention are *PORTRAIT OF JENNY* (Selznick) and *THE RED SHOES* (British, J. Arthur Rank). Each of these films will be rewarding to the student of theatre.

Year's Top Films

The National Board of Review has announced its choice of the "ten best" films of 1948. Among the chosen few appear four reported on in this Department: *Hamlet* (which heads the list), *Gentleman's Agreement*, *Johnny Belinda*, and *Joan of Arc*. The others: *The Search*, *Sitting Pretty*, *I Remember Mama*, *The Bishop's Wife*, *The Red Shoes*, and *The Snake Pit*. The Board's "Committee on Exceptional Films" elected *Treasure of Sierra Madre* as one of its group of ten pictures having special

"artistic merit and importance." Walter Huston was the committee's choice for the best performance by an actor for his work in that film.

As this is being written, speculation on the year's Academy Awards has quieted down. It will be revived, however, shortly before the coveted "Oscars" are passed out. If some of the more recent film candidates have not yet reached your city, you can expect them in a rush after the announcements have been made. General release of a promising picture is frequently withheld on the chance that Academy publicity will increase its box-office magnetism.

New Don Juan Colorful

One of the new year's better offerings is *Adventures of Don Juan*, and Warner Brothers has done well by its new treatment of the old tale. This latest version of a famous legend is the most elaborate and colorful yet. Exceptionally good Technicolor gives spectacular richness to the 100 sets and 5000 costumes. Despite the lush trappings, the story comes off with excitement and entertainment value well above the average.

Producer Jerry Wald (JOHNNY BELINDA, MILDRED PIERCE) had under him a skilled director, Vincent Sherman, who successfully exploited all the familiar aspects of the story. This is Sherman's first period picture, his previous work having been in realistic drama (OLD ACQUAINTANCE, THE UNFAITHFUL). Woody Bredell was in charge of camera operations; film editor was Alan Crosland, Jr., son of the late Alan Crosland, who directed John Barrymore in DON JUAN when it was first made at the Warner Brothers studio in 1927. A capable job was done on the screenplay by George Oppenheimer and Harry Kurnitz.

Cast of Varied Backgrounds

This is Errol Flynn's 32nd starring role, and one of his best. Co-starred is Viveca Lindfors, the Swedish actress who made her successful American screen debut for Warners in *To the Victor*. Miss Lindfors, who has starred in 16 Swedish films, has the natural brunette beauty to portray Queen Margaret of Spain, for whom Don Juan, played of course by Flynn, gives his one great love.

Supporting the two leads is a talented cast. Alan Hale portrays Leporello, Don Juan's servant and companion. This is Hale's 11th picture with Flynn. The two are most vividly remembered, perhaps, for their Robin Hood and Friar Tuck of a few years ago. DON JUAN happily exceeds in merit the earlier ROBIN HOOD. The latter gave the impression that its characters were actors having great fun playing at cops-and-robbers; the new DON JUAN, however, catches much of the spirit and verve of the best pictures made by the senior Douglas Fairbanks.

Robert Douglas, from the London stage, appears as the villainous Prime Minister of Spain, Romney Brent, also from England, makes his American screen debut as Philip III, King of Spain, with a record of 12 important British film roles behind him.

By coincidence, the Don Serafin of the film is played by Fortunio Bonanova. Bonanova portrayed the screen's first Don Juan in silent pictures and this summer goes to Italy to play the screen's first singing Don Juan in DON GIOVANNI.

Mrs. Flynn makes her first screen appearance — she says it will be her last — in an ideal finale for her debut as a film actress. Don Juan, near the end of the story, has announced to his companion his determination to forsake romance and devote his life to meditation and study. At that moment a coach, bearing a beautiful girl, stops to learn directions to Barcelona. The coach moves on, and in a twinkling the great lover casts aside his resolutions and gallops off after the coach. The girl is Mrs. Flynn.

Others in the cast are Mary Stuart, Helen Westcott, Ann Rutherford, Monte Blue, Douglas Kennedy, Robert Warwick, Jeanne Shepherd, Aubrey Mather, and Una O'Connor.

Record "Master" Set

Edward Carrere of the art department at Warners was placed in charge of design. The script listed a modest 58



Errol Flynn in *Adventures of Don Juan*, a Warner Bros. Technicolor production.

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sets, but these broke down to 113 when divisions of large sets on the streets of London and Madrid and the 22 sections of the Royal Spanish Palace were listed separately.

The Palace itself was the biggest problem; producer Wald insisted on grandeur on a large scale to get full production value. All those concerned with the job realized that ordinary set-building procedure might very well tie up all of the studio's 22 sound stages. Carrere came up with the answer. It was a symple system, based on procedures frequently adopted on a small scale for similar situations. Carrere applied it to the requirements of the huge Palace set.

On Stage 7, the largest at the studio — its area is just short of 35,000 square feet — was built a master set, the Palace entrance with the grand staircase in the background. Black Masonite served as flooring for this and the remaining 21 secondary sets called for in the story. Every wall was movable; each was a unit that could be assembled quickly as needed, the stored against the walls of the stage when not in use — much like books on a shelf or stage flats in a scene dock.

Carrere worked out every scene with a complete model of the multiple setting scaled a quarter of an inch to the foot. Production delays were reduced to a minimum. The completed project reminded one of the popular "unit sets" employed in many art theatres. There were 18 wall units, 26 feet high and 26

feet wide. Two of these had double doors 20 feet high; two others had entrance ways of 12 feet. The separate units were mounted on heavy bases rolling on 18-inch iron wheels. Six units with windows and three with fireplaces, huge tapestries — two were valued at \$15,000 — and large columns completed the essential pieces.

The single stationary unit was the grand staircase, its topmost level reaching 65 feet above the stage floor. A hundred men could stand across the bottom step. The center level supported a two-ton statue of the legendary Spanish hero, Cid.

The saving in production time was not confined to set changes. The equipment that carried 46,000 amperes and furnished enough light to illuminate a small village had to be put in place only once. Three hundred arc lights were hoisted by an electrically operated crane to the cat-walks.

Action Dominates Story

Don Juan is full of chases, duels, and narrow escapes. Most exciting of the lot is the battle for possession of the Royal Palace, when the Duke de Lorca attempts to seize the power from the King and Queen. The climax, with Don Juan and the Duke engaged with rapiers and daggers, provides a spectacular sequence.

The pace of the picture is quickly set, rivaling that of the Hollywood thrillers. Within five minutes after Don Juan has climbed a trellis to a lady's apartment he is fighting his first duel. Five more duels follow before the film is over.

An important action occurred immediately after the shooting of one sequence. Wigs had not been issued to the 36 male actors who participated in the fencing drill, one of the picture's highlights; instead each boy and man had let his hair grow from five to six inches and then suffered it to be marceled. After the final take, there was a mass storming of nearby barber shops.

Newcomer Shows Promise

As this is written, the early release of another new picture promises to attract and please adventure-loving patrons. *Wake of the Red Witch* (Republic) is being called the best sea story to reach the screen in recent years. Starring John Wayne and Gail Russell, the film is reported to combine an unusually interesting and complex tale with the conventional deck brawls and pitching ships.

Top-Grossing Films

Motion Picture Herald recently listed the seven top-grossing films for the 1947-48 season (September to September). Public taste and critical judgment do not always coincide, but here are the seven "big" ones, for what they're worth (which is plenty): *The Bachelor and the Bobby Soxer* (RKO), *Green Dolphin Street* (MGM), *Cass Timberlane* (MGM), *Life with Father* (Warners), *Mother Wore Tights* (20th Century-Fox), *Road to Rio* (Paramount) and *Unconquered* (Paramount).

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On The High School Stage

News items published in this department are contributed by schools affiliated with

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Torrington, Conn.

TORRINGTON High School (Thespian Troupe 611): *Charley's Aunt*, *Blue Bells*, *The Trysting Place*. Radio play, *The Village Lawyer*, presented over Station WLCR. Ethel L. Johnson, troupe sponsor.—Marlene J. Ross, Secretary.

Waukegan, Ill.

WAUKEGAN Township High School (Thespian Troupe 857): *January Thaw*, *Brief Musings*, *Spreading the News*. Dramatics club meetings devoted to study of pantomime and make-up. Every Monday night the Speech Workshop discussion is conducted over Station WKRS. Marjorie Johnson, troupe sponsor.—Lois Froelich, Secretary

Wood River, Ill.

EAST Alton-Wood River High School (Thespian Troupe 733): *Calling All Ghosts*, *Smilin' Through*, *The Governor Said No* (original), *In Grim Earnest* (original), *Magazine Princess* (operetta), *Harvest Festival* and *Coronation*, *Girl Scout Revue*. Dramatics club meetings devoted to making of masks and make-up. One fifteen-minute radio program each month. Lockwood E. Wiley, troupe sponsor.—Rhea McGuire, Secretary

Davenport, Iowa

IMMACULATE Conception Academy (Thespian Troupe 564): *Lady of Fatima*, "Gay Nineties Revue." Boys from St. Ambrose Academy used in the cast for *Lady of Fatima*. Fifteen students admitted to Thespian membership. Sister Angelita, B.V.M., troupe sponsor.—Sonya Goering, Secretary

Hope, Ark.

HOPE High School (Thespian Troupe 36): *The Unfriendly Village*, *Mugsy's Merry Christmas*, *My True Love*, *The Marshal's Revenge*, *Dividends from a Dream*, *The Mysterious Tree*, *Life of the Party*. Float for home-coming parade, daily radio broadcast during American Education Week, showing of various films at dramatics club meetings, participation in fifteen-minute daily radio program over local station, attendance at performance of *Apple of His Eye* in Arkadelphia. Mrs. B. E. McMahan, troupe sponsor.

Attention, Thespians

In order to give more Thespian Troupes space in this department, we find it necessary to condense news report as shown in this issue. The titles of plays, pageants, and other dramatic productions are shown in italics. Plays listed were either given this season, or are scheduled for production this spring. Reports now reaching us will appear in publication in the April and May issues. Reports submitted after April 1 will appear in publication next fall. — EDITOR

Montrose, Colo.

MONTROSE County High School (Thespian Troupe 383): *The Scarecrow Creeps*, *The Valiant*, *The Bishop's Candlesticks*, *The Smell of the Yukon*, *For Distinguished Service*, *The Elves and the Shoemaker*, *The City Slicker* and *Orr Nell*. Entry in drama festival in April. Olin H. Horn, troupe sponsor.—Maxine Galloway, Secretary

Masontown, West Va.

MASONTOWN High School (Thespian Troupe 331): *Don't Darken My Door*, *The Baby Sitter*, *Where's That Report Card?* *A Pair of Lunatics*. Christmas cantata presented by Girl's Choir. Entry in district drama festival at Fairmont State College. Dramatics club meetings devoted to study of one-act plays. C. N. Malcolm, troupe sponsor.—Margaret Scarton, Secretary

Struthers, Ohio

STRUTHERS High School (Thespian Troupe 89): *We Shook the Family Tree*, *Grapes for Dinner*. Dramatics club meetings devoted to study of stage techniques. One-half hour radio show over Station WFMJ. O. Davis, troupe sponsor.—Mury Lou Toto, Secretary

DeKalb, Ill.

DE KALB Township High School (Thespian Troupe 756): *George Washington Slept Here*. Make-up and scenery are being studied at the dramatics club meetings. Students have attended performances of *Our Town*, *George Washington Slept Here*, and



This scene occurred in the production of *The Black Flamingo* as staged by Thespians of Troupe 830 of the Iowa City, Iowa, High School, with Lola C. Hughes as director.

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Brigadoon. School participating in drama contest this spring. Charles F. Dayton, troupe sponsor.—*Marilyn Maurer, Secretary*

Watertown, S. Dak.

WATERTOWN High School (Thespian Troupe 330): *You Can't Take It With You*, *Ki-Yi Legend*, *Ki-Yi Kapers*. Dramatics club meetings given to study of play production. Many Thespians appear on programs sponsored by Radio Club. Florence M. Bruhn, troupe sponsor.—*Mary Scothorn, Secretary*

Cleveland, Ohio

BROOKLYN High School (Thespian Troupe 699): *Cuckoos on the Hearth*, *Beyond the Horizon*, annual one-act play festival scheduled for April 9. Play selection, stage design, lighting, sound effects, and make-up are subjects for dramatics club meetings. Students have attended numerous performances at the Cleveland Playhouse and Hanna Theatre. Georgiana Skinner, troupe sponsor.—*June Lamb, Secretary*

Palouse, Wash.

PALOUSE High School (Thespian Troupe 519): *The Skeleton Walks*, *Miss Jimmy*, *Chimes of the Holy Night*, one-act play festival scheduled for early in March. Mr. Cass' articles appearing in *DRAMATICS* are being used as the basis for a study of make-up by members of the dramatics club. Joseph Tremblay, troupe sponsor.—*Patsy Williamson, Secretary*

Gainesville, Fla.

FLORIDA High School One-Act Play Festival held at the Gainesville High School, December 11, with University of Florida Department as sponsoring organization. Plays presented in the festival: *Fiat Lux* (Putnam

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High School), *White Iris* (Robert E. Lee High School, Jacksonville), *Afterwards* (Orlando Senior High School), *Christmas for Wilbur* (Andrew Jackson High School, Jacksonville), *Curse You, Jack Dalton* (Hillsborough High School), *The Curtain* (Bay County High School, Panama City), *Submerged* (Miami Edison High School). Superior rating given to *White Iris* directed by Eunice Horne, and to *Submerged*, directed by Sophia P. Derbyshire. Professor Delwin B. Dusenbury, festival chairman.

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Evansville, Indiana

BENJAMIN Bosse High School (Thespian Troupe 807): *The Man Who Came To Dinner*, *Gaslight*, Christmas program, Easter program. A number of Thespians from this troupe active in Evansville Little Theatre. Lenore M. Cupp, troupe sponsor.—*Suzanne Johnson, Secretary*

Minneapolis, Minn.

ACADEMY of the Holy Angels, (Thespian Troupe 568). One-act play festival



Scene from a production of *Children of the Moon* given at the Wasatch Academy (Troupe 833), Mt. Pleasant, Utah. Directed by David Allen Thomas.

Scene from *January Thaw* presented as an All-school play at the Keokuk, Iowa, High School. Directed by James A. McKinstry. Set designed by A. C. Lumberg.



sponsored by North Central Region of the Catholic Theatre Conference and Region 1 of the Minnesota Catholic High School on November 27. The following plays were entered: *The Vision at the Inn* (Academy of the Holy Angels), *The Happy Day* (St. Anthony High School), *Gray Bread* (St. Joseph's Academy, St. Paul), *Submerged* (Cretin High School, St. Paul), *The Blue Teapot* (St. Agnes High School, St. Paul), *If Men Played Cards as Women Do* (St. Thomas Military Academy, St. Paul), *Six Who Pass While the Lentils Boil* (St. Margaret's Academy). Critic Judge: Reverend Karl G. Schroeder; Festival Chairman, Sister Charitas.

Salinas, Calif.

SALINAS Union High School (Thespian Troupe 501): *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, *Our Town*, *You Can't Take It With You*, *Gloria*, "Living Newspaper" (original). Weekly campus reporter over Station KSBW. Scattered programs over Station KSBW. Abigail A. Dunn, troupe sponsor.—Janet Grout, Secretary

Memphis, Tenn.

MESSICK High School (Thespian Troupe 186): *The Curse of An Aching Heart*, *The Divine Flora*, *Antic Spring*. A number of students are active in the Memphis Little Theatre, with several appearing in the production of *Yellow Jacket* last summer. The hundredth anniversary of the Memphis City schools observed by the Speech Departments with play-pageant called *It Takes a Hundred Years*. Formal Thespian induction ceremony for twenty-nine new members held on December 16. Freda Kenner, troupe sponsor.

La Feria, Texas

LA FERIA High School (Thespian Troupe 863): *The Little That Is Good*, *Damsels in Distress*, *Football Hero*, *The Surprise Package*. Mrs. J. L. McNail, troupe sponsor.—Elaine Denson, Secretary

Midland, Texas

MIDLAND High School (Thespian Troupe 845): *The Promised One*, with cast of some hundred twenty students, was given to a large audience on December 16, with production being sponsored jointly by Speech Department and Music Department. Verna Harris, troupe sponsor.

Daytona Beach, Fla.

MAINLAND High School (Thespian Troupe 35): *Children of the Moon*, *The Terrible Meek*, *They Put on a Play*, Christmas fantasy. Dramatics club meetings given to study of make-up, and playwriting. A number of students attended play festival held at the University of Florida. Students also saw performances of *I Remember Mama*, *Night of January 16th*, and *Hamlet*. Barbara Dodson, troupe sponsor.—Sue Bragg, Secretary

Thief River Falls, Minn.

LINCOLN High School (Thespian Troupe 508): *Little Women*, *Light Competition*, *Rich Man*, *Poor Man*, *The Instincts of a Lady*, *Roughly Speaking*. School acted as host to district one-act play festival in February. Helen Movius, troupe sponsor.—Gloria Bergland, Secretary

Grand Lodge, Mich.

GRAND LEDGE High School (Thespian Troupe 356): *January Thaw*, *Hearts*. Dramatics club meetings devoted to study of radio plays, stagecraft, make-up. A number of students are attending plays given by the Lansing, Michigan, Civic Players. Mirim Ellis, troupe sponsor.

ADDENDUM

The Thespian Roll of Honor published in our February issue should have included Thespian Troupe 108, Kenmore, New York, High School, with Eve Strong as sponsor. Troupe 108 was established as of May 1, 1930, giving the Kenmore High School a record of nineteen years of continuous affiliation with The National Thespian Society.—EDITOR

Tokyo, Japan

TOKYO American School at Meguro (Thespian Troupe 909): *The Night of January 16*, *Ghost Train*, *Our Town*. Troupe is making an extensive study of Japanese theatre. Members are seeing performers of Noh, Kabuki, and modern plays. Students are also collecting masks and theatre prints. Frank Jakes, Jr., troupe sponsor.

Carlisle, Pa.

CARLISLE High School (Thespian Troupe 214): *We Shook the Family Tree*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *The Ghostly Passenger*, *The Tree*, *Christmas in Other Lands*, *Christmas in Review*. Thespian and dramatics club meetings devoted to study of play production, theatre traditions, and one-act plays. Helen H. Martin, troupe sponsor.—Jeanne Baker, Secretary

Michigan City, Indiana

ISAAC C. Elston High School (Thespian Troupe 91): *Elves on the Shoemaker*, *Off the Pewter Platter*, *Why the Chimes Rang*, special Christmas program. Dramatics club meetings devoted to study of various types of theatres. Radio drama presented in December. Mellie Luck, troupe sponsor.

Provo, Utah

BRIGHAM Young High School (Thespian Troupe 454): *Rip Van Winkle*, *Christmas Carol*, *Heidi*, *The Elves and the Shoemaker*. Thespian assembly program given in January. Students are giving their meetings to a study of children's theatre. Participation in regional drama and speech festivals this spring. A number of students are seeing play productions presented by Brigham Young University. George L. Lewis, troupe sponsor.—Ellen Terry, Vice President

East St. Louis, Ill.

ST. TERESA Academy (Thespian Troupe 118): *Lady of Fatima*, *A Woman Wrapped in Silence*, *For Flag and Cross*. Choric Verse is among subjects being studied by dramatics students. Scene from *Lady of Fatima* presented over local radio station. Students attended performances of *Medea* and the Olivier film of *Henry V* in St. Louis. Sister Mary Pius, troupe sponsor.—Peggy Baker, Secretary

Crookston, Minn.

CENTRAL High School (Thespian Troupe 706): *A Young Man's Fancy*, *The Shepherd's Star*, *The Balcony Scene*. Dramatics club meetings are given to a study of make-up. Evelyn Probstfield, troupe sponsor.

Celina, Ohio

CELINA High School (Thespian Troupe 473): *We Shook the Family Tree*, *Mr. Billionworth and His Millions*, participation in the Ohio High School League contest this spring. Plans are being made for troupe to be represented at the National Thespian Dramatic Arts Conference at Indiana University in June. Maxine C. Garwick, troupe sponsor.—Lois Stedke, Secretary

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Hudson, N. Y.

HUDSON High School (Thespian Troupe 630): *Song of Bernadette, Love Hits Wilbur, The Christmas Story*. Classes organized to study different phases of drama, stagecraft, acting, make-up, and radio. Radio programs over local station presented during fall semester. Bette Grant, troupe sponsor.—*Rosalie Epstein, Secretary*

Tokanset, Wash.

TONASKET High School (Thespian Troupe 910): *Don't Take My Penny, Too Much Mistletoe, Mystery of the Tapping Kegs, Stroke at Twelve*. Thespian Troupe established during fall semester with twenty-six students forming the charter roll. Yvetta Snowden, troupe sponsor.—*Barbara Eberlein, Secretary*

Flemington, West Va.

FLEMINGTON High School (Thespian Troupe 19): *Just Underneath, One Happy Family, Love Hits Wilbur*. Dramatics club meetings are given to a study of play produc-

tion. Twelve students admitted to Thespian membership in January. George E. Wilson, troupe sponsor.—*Betty Thompson, Secretary*

Salem, Ohio

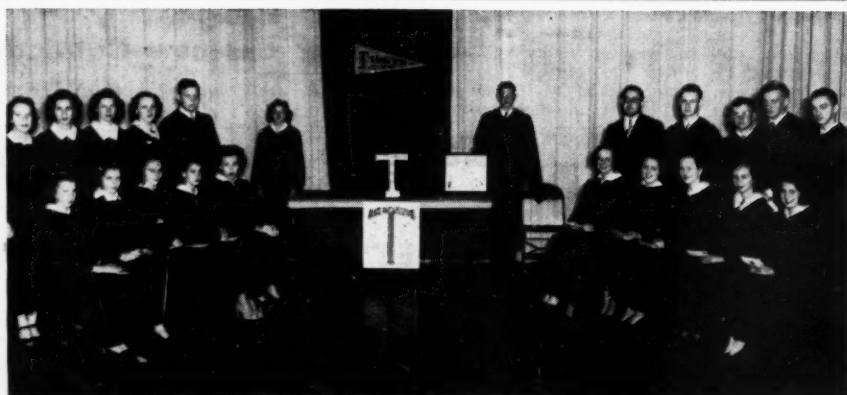
SALEM High School (Thespian Troupe 358): *Life with Father, Christmas Trees for Sale, By-Line for St. Luke*, Christmas tableaux. Irene Layle Weeks, troupe sponsor.—*Martha Jean Whinery, Secretary*

Vernal, Utah

UNITAH High School (Thespian Troupe 621): *We Shook the Family Tree*. Electa J. Caldwell and B. W. Hales, troupe sponsors.

Leetsdals, Pa.

LEETSDALE High School (Thespian Troupe 421): *A Date with Judy*. Play production, acting and make-up demonstrations are being presented at the dramatics club meetings. Troupe meetings are held every two weeks. Elaine M. Saupp, troupe sponsor.—*Diane Challis, Secretary*



Thespian induction ceremony at the Williamsburg, Iowa, High School (Troupe 316). This energetic group is directed by George Reichard.

What's New Among Books and Plays

The purpose of this department is to keep our readers posted on the latest theatre and drama publications available from publishers. Mention or review of a book or play in this department does not constitute an endorsement by Dramatics. Opinions expressed are those of the reviewer only.

Samuel French

25 West 45th St., New York, N. Y.

A Broom for the Bride, a farce in three acts, by George Batson. 8 w., 5 m. Royalty, \$25.00. This fast-moving plot concerns a girl, who plans to marry the son of a wealthy socialite, for peace and security, but who marries instead, the exciting New York reporter whom she loves. Improbable complications consist of a wealthy aunt masquerading as a maid, a kidnapping, and letters concealed in the portrait of a fake ancestor. The curtain closes as the groom and ex-groom chase a fire engine. The play should be good fun for any high school or other amateur group.—June Lingo

My Favorite Girl Friend, a farce in three acts, by Nydia Taylor. 6 w., 4 m. Royalty, \$10.00. The banker husband of the story conceals his poetry-writing tendencies from his wife, who opposes them as much as she does his sister's grocery boy friend. After much verbal fencing, the loose threads of the plot are tied: the lovers get together, the typical Englishman becomes engaged to another member of the household, and both audience and husband are surprised at the secret authorship of his wife. In spite of the forced lines, wisecracks, type characters, and many farce tricks, such as men masquerading as women, the play may prove interesting to amateurs who do not spend too much time in its preparation.—June Lingo

The Servant in the House, a play in five acts, by Charles Kennedy. 2 w., 5 m. Royalty \$50. One set — a combination dining-sitting room of an English country vicarage. The play tells the story of a Vicar who is tempted by worldly luxuries but returns to real Christian service and paths of humility. He is aided by two brothers: one that he has forsaken, and one that he does not recognize until he has made his decision to follow the dictates of his conscience. Based upon the theme that spiritual needs cannot be denied, the play presents a timely moral. Well written. Recommended.—Marion Stuart

Girl in the Moon, a comedy in three acts, by Harriet Eager Davis. 5 m., 6 w. Royalty, \$25.00. This play concerns two shy youngsters, a boy and a girl, who manage to get into various difficulties through their efforts to appear sophisticated. Elizabeth, the girl, comes to visit the boy's family and succeeds well with her act of pretending until she finds that a Mr. Van Dexter with whom she has "invested" her money and that held by the boy, Dough, is in reality a crook. Of course, all ends well by the close of the third act. The play has excellent parts for high school players, with plenty of fast-moving events. The second and third acts permit the use of as many boys and girls as may be desired. In this respect the play makes a good choice for use at commencement time. The play is relatively easy to stage.—Elmer Strong

Walter H. Baker Company
178 Tremont St., Boston, Mass.

The Sweetheart of U Baka Pi, a comedy in three acts, by John Nash. 8 m., 8 w. Purchase of 12 copies required. Non-royalty. The action of this play takes place in the lounge room of "Recreation Hall" in the Saccarrappa Institute of Learning. The greater part of the action concerns Duane Ruynon, a pledge to Sic 'Em Fido Fraternity, and Rheba Saunders, a pledge to U Baka Pi Sorority. The play is designed for entertainment only and in that respect it accomplishes its purpose. Laughter is provided by both the lines and

the farcial situations in which the leading characters find themselves. An easy play to stage, with special appeal to amateur drama groups.—Elmer Strong

Air Express, a fantastical comedy in three acts, by J. C. McMullen and Vance Halloway. 6 m., 6 w. Royalty, \$10.00. Walter Brenner, a retired professor, devotes all his time to scientific research, centering around a trip to Mars in his space ship. His son and helper falls in love with the daughter of a rival professor and so the complications spin through three merry acts. With newscasts, ship crashes, and voices over the ether phone, there is never a dull moment throughout this comedy. The characters are definite types easily cast within a high school group.—Myrtle M. Paetznick

The Overnight Ghost, a farce in three acts, by Kurtz Gordon. 5 m., 6 w. and a radio voice. Royalty, \$25.00. The plot centers about a legend of an overnight ghost, who brings good fortune to those who grant him lodging for the night. At the Harcourt home for roomers and tourists, Peggy Harcourt and a roomer, Ted, conspire with Elmer, an actor of the Civic Theatre, to impersonate the ghost and persuade Mr. Harcourt to give his consent to their marriage to obtain Peggy's legacy; but complications arise from Danny Reegan, who knows Elmer; Doris, Elmer's jealous fiancé; Mme. Midnight and Prof. Ecto, mediums, who put on a seance unsuccessfully.

Through a winning Irish sweepstake ticket, Ted gets a fortune and Mr. Harcourt's consent to marry Peggy, and the play is concluded by a surprise announcement that the audience has previewed a Hollywood picture, *The Overnight Ghost*. This lively farce, which seems to have used every resource to get a laugh, is suitable for high and community theatre groups.—June Lingo

Dramatic Publishing Company
1706 S. Prairie Ave., Chicago 16, Ill.

Sense and Sensibility, a dramatization of the novel by Jane Kendall. 5 m., 9 w., one girl, one boy. Royalty, \$10.00. Here are the typical Jane Austen women:—the sensible sister, the romantic one, the sly rival, the doting mother, and the poor but genteel one. Here too is the romantic hero, the poor but dashing gallant, the true friend. The country side is the same, the marriage plans work out and everyone is happy. This is an excellent dramatization and those of us who love Jane Austen are grateful for a new script.—Roberta D. Sheets

Susie the Siren, a three act comedy, by Anne Coulter Martens. 7 m., 9 w., Royalty, \$10.-\$25.00. Sixteen year old Susie has decided to be a siren and dares her boy friend, Jim, to prove his devotion by bringing her a prize flower from the Oakley garden and by painting a sign on the door of the rival school. Her father is the high school principal and has had Jim and all the team promise there will be no rowdism. Jim is torn between loyalty to his school and a desire to please Susie. The former triumphs but the flower is stolen, the door is painted and Jim is of course accused. Susie repents rather late. The play is written definitely for high school production, is easy to do, and the plot less objectionable than most plays of that type. This reviewer still hopes some dramatist will write a play of secondary schools

ENTERTAINING NOVELTIES

Wetmore's Pantomimes and other Easy Entertainments are reaching the same popularity as their readings and plays. Here are a few that have had many successful productions.

- AND THE GHOST WALKED.** Kate Alice White. A mystery pantomime. 10 characters, either sex, and reader. 10 min. One of the funniest pantomimes offered 50¢
- BEHIND THE SCENES.** Kate Alice White. Skit. 5 m., 3 f. 15 min. Shows the radio scene as it is enjoyed by the listening fans, and the "talent" as it really is at the broadcasting station. Few lines to memorize. 40¢
- CENTURY OF LADIES AND NOVELS.** Felton-Mahood. A skit for 2 f. (8 f. can be used). 20 min. No scenery required. Data posters tell time and place. Topic, a hundred years of novels. Two characters tick off the years by changing hats 60¢
- DEAR MOM.** Enna N. James. 1948. One Rehearsal Skit. Good for Mothers Day or any time. 15 f. 15 min. or more. (Skit gives opportunity for interpolated readings and music). A series of short scenes are staged while a reader gives the lines — a letter she is writing to her mother. A most effective, easy entertainment 60¢
- ETIQUETTE IN 1833.** Judith S. Bond. Skit in costume for 2 girls. Introduces minut. 10 to 15 minutes. A comic little picture of the strict rules of Colonial times. 60¢
- THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER.** Kate Alice White. 1948 Melodrama in Pantomime by this author of successful comedy entertainments. 15 min. 7 principal characters and extras. May be all male or all female cast. While the reader tells the story, the hero saves the old homestead of his sweetheart's father from the despicable villain 50¢
- FOLLY ON THE TROLLEY.** S. Stephenson. 1947 skit of the gay nineties. 10 characters. A funny pantomime stunt, easily staged. The characters are street car passengers, who perform to the comedy lines of a reader. If a laugh is desired, use this skit 50¢
- HERE COMES THE BRIDE.** Kate Alice White. 1948 Mock Wedding. 5 m., 6 f. and extras. 15 min. There are laughs galore in this new entertainment. Complete directions for a successful performance 50¢
- HOW TO GET A MALE.** S. Stephenson, author of "Folly On the Trolley". 1948 hillbilly pantomime. 5 m., 3 f. and reader. 15 min. We are sure this will be as successful this year as "Folly On the Trolley" was last year. A sure laugh getter 50¢
- LOSING BATTLE, THE.** Felton-Mahood. 4 f. 15 min. Four women: (one plump and resigned, one plump and distressed, one very plump and unconcerned, and one young and slender) at the athletic club. The lines are funny and so is the action 50¢
- LOUDER, PLEASE.** Campbell. Force. 2 m., 1 f. 15 min. An old man and woman, strangers to each other, are sitting on the same park bench. They are both very deaf and because they cannot understand each other, are having an altercation when the policeman appears 40¢
- PRAIRIE ROMANCE.** Pantomime. 10 min. 6 or 8 characters, either sex, and a reader. A satire on the western movie. Clever 35¢
- YOU TELL 'EM BILLIE.** Kathryn Wayne. Short comedy sketch for one man using old-style Ford horn. 25¢

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where the characters have a real conflict, don't talk jive, and indulge in antics.—*Roberta D. Sheets*

Now and Forever, a comedy in three acts by Irving Phillips. 6 m., 5 w., Royalty, \$25.00. Every family has a martyr and Aunt Ellen is almost a slave in the Pierce home. She is always on call for the whole family but still dreams of the sweetheart she left to take her sister's place in this family. Doubtless she would have continued a drudge, but a precocious child, Minerva, comes to visit next door and taking a liking to Ellen, urges her to make a declaration for her own independence. Ellen does and the old sweetheart comes back in the person of Minerva's father. The play is well edited and production notes are good. The characters are real, the dialogue moves and the wholesome family atmosphere is pleasing.—*Roberta D. Sheets*

The Heuer Publishing Co.
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

The Boarding House Reach, a comedy in three acts, by Donald Payton. 7 m., 9 w. Royalty, \$10.00. Living room setting. Here is another comedy of family life in which the adolescent son succeeds in getting his parents off on a trip so that he can put his money-making schemes to work. He turns the place into a boarding house with the reluctant assistance of his sisters. In the usual fictional style complications pile up, but he succeeds in overcoming all difficulties, and in the end becomes the hero as well as winning the coveted possession over which it all started—a bicycle! This play may be useful to those who want a large cast with much rushing in and out of characters in a state of excitement.—*Helen Mocius*

Off the Track, a comedy in three acts, by Felicia Metcalfe. 5 m., 8 w. Royalty, \$10.00. The scene, a small railroad station, provides an unusual, yet easily assembled and ef-

fective setting. Into this wayside station come characters from all walks of life, typical of the crowd found in any station before the train arrives. The various circumstances that arise seem plausible and the characters true-to-life. The outstanding feature of this comedy is the natural, realistic atmosphere and mood created. Easy to produce as most of the roles are short, and the types varied. Extras could be included.—*Helen Mocius*

Glory to Goldy, a comedy in three acts, by Albert Johnson. 8 m., 6 w. Budget plan, royalty and 14 copies of the play for \$12.00. Repeat performances, \$2.50 each. Another of those domestic comedies with the usual assortment of family problems, as well as individual problems of the youngest, the determined Goldy. She stops at nothing to gain her heart's desire, a swimming pool in the back yard. Her vigorous campaign to accomplish the impossible upset the plans of every one else in the family but true to form with comedies, Goldy wins out and all her drastic endeavors so disastrous to other plans prove valuable to everyone in the end and the swimming pool becomes a reality.—*Helen Mocius*

Dramatist Play Service, Inc.
6 East 39th St., New York 16, N. Y.

Henrietta the Eighth, a comedy in three acts, by Kurtz Gordon. 6 m., 9 w. Royalty, \$25.00. The entire action of this sparkling modern comedy takes place in the home of Claire Sutton, a political enthusiast with little time for home and daughters. They in turn, arrogantly use their mother's secretaries as personal maids, all but number eight. Henrietta called the Eighth turns the tables, looks after their love affairs, exposes a political opponent and takes over generally. Dancing in and out through the play is the Coke Crowd with the Blitz Brothers to add excitement. Modern dialogue, fast movement, and the use of extras put this play on the popular list for high school groups.—*Myrtle M. Paetznick*

The Winslow Boy, a play in four acts, by Terence Rattigan. 6 m., 4 w. This is undoubtedly one of the truly fine plays of recent years. It is certainly Rattigan's best play to date, a play which, in the words of Howard Barnes, is "a challenging and memorable piece of theatre which speaks a common and abiding language in its declaration of personal liberty. Briefly stated, the story is that of the Winslow family's efforts to prove the innocence of one of the boys in the family who is accused of having stolen a postal order for five shillings while attending an English Government school. The boy's father, Arthur Winslow, is especially determined to prove that his young son is not guilty. The family wins its case with the Government. This play is, above all else, good drama that plays well on the stage. The dialogue is particularly good. *The Winslow Boy* will make an excellent choice for advanced high school drama groups, colleges, and Little Theatres.—*Ernest Bavely*

Years Ago, a play in three acts, by Ruth Gordon. 4 m., 5 w. 1 cat. Royalty quoted upon application. This is an extremely fine play with particular appeal for high school groups. The story concerns Ruth Gordon's first steps towards a stage career, with her home at Wollaston, Massachusetts, as the scene for the three acts. All parts afford excellent opportunities for stage work, particularly that of Clinton Jones, the father. The dialogue is lively, with plenty of action to keep the story moving. Furnishing the stage for this play will serve as an interesting project for the school. Costumes of 1913 will also help to make this play a project in which several school departments can cooperate. We recommend this play for its wholesome theme and for the many opportunities it affords for interesting and worth while stage work. (See our October, 1948, issue of DRAMATICS for an account of how this play was staged at Northwestern University.)—*Ernest Bavely*

Row, Peterson & Company
Evanston, Ill.

Of All the Years, a Christmas play in one act, by Mary Brim Hess. 6 m., 7 w., small girl, carolers. Royalty quoted upon application. The action of this play takes place in the living room of an American family on Christmas Eve, with the story requiring the use of three tableau scenes. This is a well-written drama which points out that "Christmas is ageless hope for all the years for all the world of men."—*Elmer Strong*

Ladies with Lamps, a drama in one act, by Marion Wefer. 1 man, 1 boy, 5 women, additional children. The reception room of the Hampton Hospital forms the setting for this appealing play in which the efforts of a young nurse to give children in her ward the opportunity to see a circus parade come into conflict with the rigid orders of the assistant superintendent, an officious nurse of sixty-five. A well-written drama rich in theatre values.—*Ernest Bavely*

Gimme Time, a fantasy in one act, by Anne Walters. 1 m., 1 w., five children one of whom must be a boy. Royalty quoted upon application. Billy, a boy of ten is always pressed for time. But the author tells us that Billy, like many other boys of his age, is a dreamer even if he is short of time. "The progress of people is measured in moments of wonder and not by the ticking of clocks", the playwright concludes. An interesting playlet providing excellent possibilities for an effective production.—*Ernest Bavely*

Banner Play Bureau
San Francisco 2, Calif.

Through a Glass, Darkly, a play in one act, by Stanley Richards. 4 m., 3 w. Royalty, \$10. Aaron Shaeffer is obsessed with the idea that everyone is against him because he is a Jew. He quarrels first with his neighbor and then with his own son who comes home with his young wife, a Scotch-Presbyterian. The play offers an excellent lesson on the destructiveness of intolerance. It is recommended for production in assembly and has strong possibilities as a festival play.—*Elmer Strong*

John Richard Press A. N.
139 W. 44th St., New York 18, N. Y.

Blueprint for Summer Theatre, compiled and edited by Richard Beckhard and John Effrat, under the auspices of ANTA. This is a handbook which presents a complete analysis of the summer theatre field. It offers tangible material; it is written concisely, in down-to-earth understandable language; it also contains information regarding theatre personnel that can be applied to any group. Its appendices include lists of the names and addresses of those individuals and companies who supply the theatre with plays, personnel, and equipment. This is a handy reference book to include in one's drama library.—*Mary Ella Bovee*

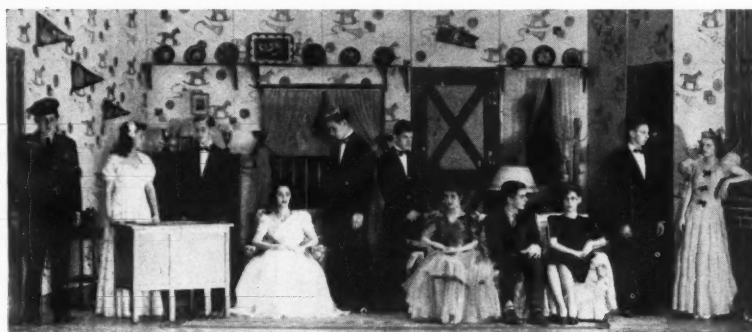
The Albyn Press
42 Frederick, Edinburgh 2, Scotland

Acting for Amateurs a modern stage handbook, by G. Paterson Whyte. Price 2 shillings 9 pence, (approximately 50 cents at present rate of exchange). The author is an actor, producer and playwright who is Chief Advisor of the Scottish Community Drama Association, and conducts drama schools, schools and lectures throughout Scotland. This little booklet should be read by all students of the community theatre and high school stage. In clear, concise form there are given (1.) aims of acting, (2.) naturalness, (3.) speech, (4.) characterization, (5.) expression of mood and emotion, (6.) movement and gesture, (7.) team work, and (8.) study and practice. It is full of very worthwhile advice to the amateur actor. Directors will find this a valuable reference for their casts to read before they begin their production.—*Jean E. Donahey*

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RESPECTFULLY YOURS

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Lydia is the quiet, bird-like wife of Professor Greenleaf, an English professor at Harvard University. Lydia is a charming mother, and bends her efforts to keep a smooth-running household for her punctilious husband. Prof. Greenleaf is a loving husband, but he is rather pompous and domineering. His first great shock comes when he finds that his wife has not only written a book on how to gain respect in the home, but that his own publisher is avid to print it. To his surprise and alarm, the book proves a tremendous success. The inevitable happens in that his own students see in the fictional husband, Albert, of the book, a caricature of himself. The suffragettes take up Mrs. Greenleaf and the book as a symbol of their

movement. The publicity shocks the Harvard faculty; Prof. Greenleaf's promotion to a much coveted chair in the University is threatened. The dean decides to send the Prof., who cannot control his wife, to a mid-west college as an exchange professor. When the dean says some unkind things about Mrs. Greenleaf, the professor rises to defend his wife. The dean is so impressed by Greenleaf's having shaken off his former pomposity that he persuades another professor to take the exchange professorial assignment. Greenleaf has recognized the Albert of the book in himself. Lydia has achieved the respect for her individuality from her husband and they are re-united on a basis of companionship.

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If you stop short of smashing the piano, there isn't much you can do at Pongo's household that will cause the raised eyebrow or the sharp intake of breath. But when word comes that Uncle Fred has left his country place (As Pongo describes it, "He has a nasty habit of slipping his collar") and is headed for town, the family blanches to the core—especially poor Pongo. Uncle Fred gets his greatest pleasure from dragging his reluctant, teen-age, nephew Pongo through one bewildering scrape after another. He even goes to the length of introducing Pongo to the most beautiful girl he'd ever seen as a veterinarian come to pare the claws of a pet parrot! It's no wonder the unfortunate Pongo regards Uncle Fred as he would a sack of dynamite he found lighting up in his presence—and well he should! This time Uncle Fred insists on taking Pongo to Mitching Hill—a suburb—and since it started to rain, calmly pushes into the nearest home and takes over!

It's there they meet this beautiful girl, and Pongo is forced to pretend he's a veterinarian. This is extremely difficult for it's love at first sight for Pongo. Then when the girl's obnoxious suitor arrives, Pongo can hardly contain himself. Uncle Fred, however, happily involves them deeper and deeper. In shame-faced despair, Pongo wants to drag Uncle Fred away from the house and out of Mitching Hill entirely, but the beaming Uncle Fred won't budge. He likes to spread sweetness and light, he explains. "Even in a foul hole like Mitching Hill, I asked myself, how can I leave this foul hole a better and happier foul hole than I found it?" And he does—even to the point of having the police pick up "a suspicious looking character" who happens to be the owner of the house they've pushed into. This looks like the final blow to Pongo's romance, but it isn't. This famous and brilliant comedy will absolutely delight your cast and audience alike. We thoroughly recommend it.

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